

# CHOIR & ORGAN

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March 2020

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## BEYOND WALLS

How the RIAS  
Kammerchor  
developed its  
international  
reputation

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## DRAWING A LINE

The organ building dynasty of the  
Nitrowski family in 17th-century Poland

BEETHOVEN

### CHOIR & ORGAN OFFERS

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in our New Music section

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## MOVE IT ON!

How organs gain a fresh lease of life in new locations

## PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Understanding the slurs in Mendelssohn's Sonata no.2





# Karen McFarlane Artists

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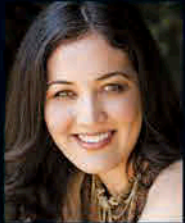
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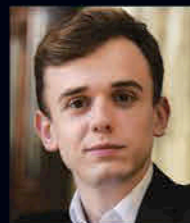
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## CHOIRS

**Saint Thomas  
Church, NYC**

**New College,  
Oxford, UK**

**Trinity College,  
Cambridge, UK**  
September 2019

**Notre-Dame  
Cathedral, Paris**  
April 2020

### \*COMPETITION WINNERS

\*Aaron Tan — AGO National Young Artist Competition in Organ Performance

\*\*Alcee Chriss — Canadian International Organ Competition



## Second thoughts

All impartial musicians and music lovers were in perfect agreement that never was anything as incoherent, shrill, chaotic and ear-splitting produced in music. The most piercing dissonances clash in a really atrocious harmony, and a few puny ideas only increase the disagreeable and deafening effect.' A review of a work by Stockhausen? Varèse? Berio? No, of the overture to Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*, written by August von Kotzebue in 1806 for the Viennese periodical *Der Freimütige* and quoted in Nicolas Slonimsky's *Lexicon of Musical Invective* (a cornucopia of negative critiques of works that are now much-loved pillars of classical repertoire – despondent composers today, read and take heart). Kotzebue was writing in an age when music critics seemed to think it clever to be as cutting as possible in their remarks, transforming criticism into something that said less about the music, and more about their own enormous egos; and one can certainly question the adjective 'impartial'. But it does demonstrate a human tendency to flinch at the unfamiliar – a characteristic perhaps even more widespread today, given that by far the greater part of classical music performances are of works composed over the last 500 years rather than of contemporary music, in contrast to 200 years ago.

Fortunately for Beethoven, and for us today, 'Leonore 3' was given the chance of another airing and lived on for posterity – an opportunity denied to many commissions today. Which is one of the reasons why the work of the John Armitage Memorial Trust (JAM) is so important (see pp. 12



and 98). For 20 years the Trust has not only commissioned new works, but also promoted repeat performances. As JAM's chair and artistic director Edward Armitage puts it: 'The old adage that the second performance is harder to come by than the first holds true ... it's disappointing when organisations commission whopping great pieces, they get one performance, and are never heard again.' Much needs to be done to

encourage audiences to listen to new music – as he says, most people assume 'it's going to sound like dragging your nails down a blackboard.'

One environment in which organisers and audiences alike do seem more willing to step outside their comfort zone is that of festivals. Maybe it is the sense of a special occasion which encourages experimentation, but festivals account for vast numbers of commissions as well as looking at established repertoire in new ways – for example, the London Handel Festival this year presents the composer's works remixed live in a south London nightclub, while *Organ Reframed*, in north London, shows off Union Chapel's 'Father' Willis organ in a completely new light (see p.43).

Meanwhile, *Choir & Organ* continues supporting young composers through our New Music series, which this issue features a gentle work for unaccompanied SATB choir (see p.38). The free download licence lasts for six months, which gives plenty of scope for your choir to sing it not just the once, but as many times as you like – do try it.

Maggie Hamilton

*Choir & Organ* shines a global spotlight on two distinctive fields of creativity, celebrating inventiveness and excellence in all their forms.

We aim to inspire our readers through giving a platform to conductors, organists, composers, and choirs of every kind; and by showcasing the imaginative craft of pipe organ building across the centuries, critiquing new organs and tackling ethics in restoring historic instruments.

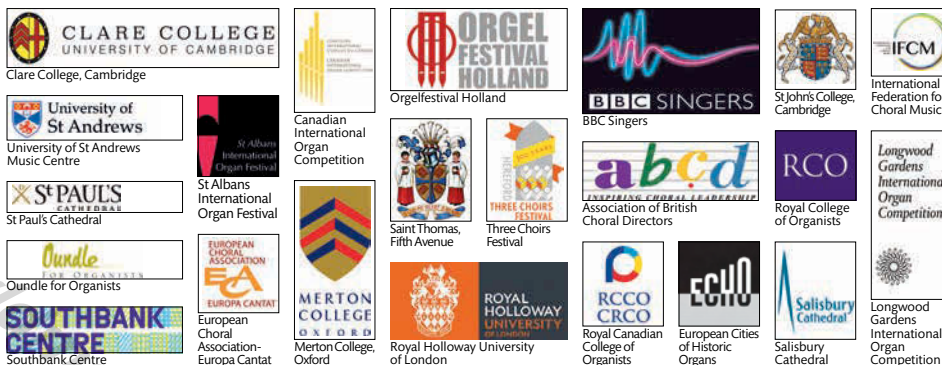
Specialist writers appraise new editions and recordings of standard repertoire and works fresh from the composer's pen, while our news and previews chart the latest developments in a changing world and present opportunities to become involved.

*Choir & Organ* is an invitation to engage with two unique areas of music – to explore the new, and look afresh at the familiar.

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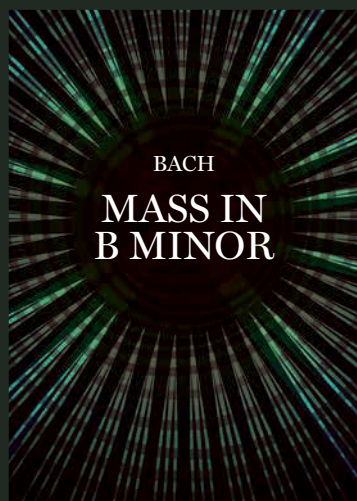
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**Tue 11 Feb 2020, 7.30pm**  
**Royal Festival Hall**  
**London**

## A monumental masterpiece

The Bach Choir was formed in 1876 to give the first UK performance of Bach's Mass in B minor, which is widely regarded as one of the greatest works of sacred choral music ever written. From its opening *Kyrie*, to the beautiful *Laudamus Te*, Bach's magnificence is evident to all who listen. The Mass in B minor was the last major work that Bach wrote, and one that was never heard in its entirety in the composer's lifetime.

The Bach Choir  
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment  
David Hill *conductor*  
Gemma Sutherland *soprano*  
Robin Blaze *counter-tenor*  
James Oxley *tenor*  
Peter Harvey *bass*

**Tickets £10-£55\***  
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**Sun 5 Apr 2020, 11am**  
**Royal Festival Hall**  
**London**

## "Even those who know the St Matthew Passion well never cease to find new marvels within it."

Claudia Pritchard, Culture Whisper

Congregate for Bach's grand drama of worship, with The Bach Choir's annual English-language performance. Ed Lyon sings the Evangelist and the Choir is joined by the period instrument ensemble Florilegium on this Passion Sunday. *The performance includes a long lunch interval between Parts I and II. Part II begins at 2.15pm.*

The Bach Choir  
Florilegium  
David Hill *conductor*  
Ed Lyon *Evangelist*  
Mark Stone *Christ*  
Elizabeth Watts *soprano*  
Christopher Ainslie *counter-tenor*  
Nicky Spence *tenor*  
Neal Davies *bass*

**Tickets £12-£58\***  
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**Thu 4 Jun 2020, 7.30pm**  
**Royal Festival Hall**  
**London**

## Choruses by the master of Italian opera

In a stirring concert, The Bach Choir presents Verdi's best-loved opera choruses including 'Va Pensiero' from *Nabucco*, the 'Anvil chorus' from *Il Trovatore* and choruses from *Macbeth*, *Aida*, *Otello* and *La Traviata*. The programme also includes Verdi's Four Sacred Pieces. The Bach Choir is delighted to be joined by the exciting young Samoan-born tenor Pene Pati who is making his London debut, and the outstanding soprano Giselle Allen.

**Verdi** Four Sacred Pieces  
**Verdi** Choruses from  
*Nabucco*, *Il trovatore*,  
*La traviata*,  
*Otello* and *Aida*

The Bach Choir  
Philharmonia Orchestra  
David Hill *conductor*  
Giselle Allen *soprano*  
Pene Pati *tenor*

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[thebachchoir.org.uk](http://thebachchoir.org.uk)

\*There are no transaction fees for in-person bookings or Southbank Centre Members and Supporters Circles. For all other bookings, transaction fees apply: £3 online and £3.50 over the phone. If you wish to receive tickets in the post, a £1 delivery charge applies.



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JAM artistic director Edward Armitage.



## RCO RECOGNITION

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS (RCO) has named its first accredited institution as the Royal Hospital School, Holbrook. Part of the RCO's wider accreditation programme, the new Institutional Accreditation scheme aims to recognise and support organ tuition at schools, colleges and other institutions in order to promote high standards in teaching and learning.

The Royal Hospital School's music department is home to an orchestra, a chapel choir of 80 singers, a chamber choir, a ceremonial marching band, a concert band, a big band, and a number of other ensembles. Over 400 pupils in the school learn at least one musical instrument and the school has three pipe organs, with eight students currently learning the instrument. Alumnus Ben Banks has gone on to pass the RCO's

Associateship Diploma (ARCO) and secure an organ scholarship at Oriel College, Oxford.

RCO director of studies Andrew McCrea said, 'In recent years, organ education has become a serious focus in the school. Thanks to its excellent resources, Holbrook has already gained a reputation as a centre for the organ through its regular recitals, which attract first-rate players, its organ open days and workshops for local schoolchildren, and as the home for the East of England Organ Day.'

Edward Allen, head of academic music at the Royal Hospital School, said, 'The school is delighted to receive this accreditation from the RCO. We are looking forward to collaborating with the RCO on workshops and masterclasses in the coming years and being able to offer our pupils – and the

wider community – some truly unique opportunities.'

Institutions with formal accreditation can offer their students a discounted Affiliate Student membership of the RCO, enabling students to benefit from courses and digital learning provision.

■ The RCO Medal – the highest award bestowed by the institution – will be presented in a ceremony on 7 March to Professor Davitt Moroney, in recognition of his achievement as an organist, harpsichordist and musicologist; to Daniel Roth, in recognition of his achievement as an organist, pedagogue and composer; and to Dr Judith Weir CBE, in recognition of her achievements in organ and choral composition. [rco.org.uk](http://rco.org.uk)

▼ The Royal Hospital School has become the first RCO-accredited institution, attesting to the school's commitment to organ education



COURTESY RCO



# GRAMMY WINNER

ROBBY KLEIN



▲ Houston Chamber Choir's artistic director Robert Simpson accepted the award for Best Choral Performance

THE GRAMMY AWARDS' BEST CHORAL PERFORMANCE category has been won by Houston Chamber Choir's (HCC) album of choral works by Duruflé.

*Duruflé: Complete Choral Works*, conducted by artistic director Robert Simpson and accompanied by Ken Cowan on the organ, was released on the Signum Classics label [Signum Classics SIGCD 571]. The disc features *Requiem*, *Messe 'Cum Jubilo'* and two a cappella works, *Notre Père* and *Quatre Motets*.

At the Awards ceremony, held on 26 January in Los Angeles, the album's producer, Blanton Alspaugh, also won a GRAMMY for Producer of the Year, Classical, for his work on eight recordings, including HCC's album.

The album was chosen out of five nominees, which included two recordings from Philadelphia-based choir The Crossing – *Voyages* and *The Arc in the Sky*; Conspirare's *The Hope of Loving*; and *The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* by Kurt Sander, performed by soloists and the PaTRAM Institute Singers.

Simpson, who accepted the award with his wife Marianna Parnas-Simpson, an HCC member, said, 'I see this as a win for the Chamber Choir, Houston's vibrant artistic community, and the entire city. It is not uncommon for elite American choirs to draw their singers from many parts of the country. I am proud that we are all Houstonians, and that our name identifies us with this great city.'

*Duruflé: Complete Choral Works* is the choir's fifth album, released in April 2019. Steve Long, CEO of Signum Records, told *C&O*, 'We were introduced to this fine US choir by Bob Chilcott and are delighted to be able to share in the success of the GRAMMY win with them. We already have future release plans with Robert and the Houston Chamber Choir, and we look forward to continued successes going forward.'

In July 2020, the choir will participate in the World Symposium on Choral Music in Auckland, New Zealand, joining 23 world-renowned choirs including the UK's Voces8, Germany's Kammerchor Stuttgart, and the Batavia Madrigal Singers from Indonesia.

The 25 professional singers of HCC have attended top music schools and conservatoires in the United States, including Juilliard, New England Conservatory, and the University of Houston. [houstonchamberchoir.org](http://houstonchamberchoir.org)

## IN BRIEF

On 3 Feb, independent music publisher The Music Sales Group rebranded itself as **Wise Music Group**. The company's global network consists of over 60 publishing houses, 30 imprints, 2 record labels, 2 digital music education companies, a book publisher, and a live concert and theatrical production company. The group's chairman Robert Wise said, 'Our new name reflects both the continuity of our business approach and the fact that ours is a family business with two generations of the Wise family well established and guiding our future progress.' [wisemusic.com](http://wisemusic.com)

The deadline for a new choral competition – **Midlands Choir of the Year** – is 31 Mar. Semi-finalists and finalists will be invited to perform live at the Lichfield Festival from 11-12 Jul. The competition is open to all Midlands-based amateur choirs and groups, performing all types of music. To enter, choirs should submit a short recording alongside the application form, downloadable from the website. [mcoty.org](http://mcoty.org)

On 11 Feb, 23-year-old **James Picton-Turbervill** became the fifth member of the same family to join the Bach Choir for a performance of Bach's B minor Mass, 144 years after his great-great-grandmother joined the Choir for the first UK performance of the work. He said, 'The choir is woven very deeply into the fabric of our family; my grandparents met in the choir, and my father also met my mother while on a choir tour.' [thebachchoir.org.uk](http://thebachchoir.org.uk)

The **Incorporated Society of Musicians** (ISM) has launched a survey to find out what musicians need in a post-Brexit world. Called 'Be part of the post-Brexit negotiations', the survey runs until 9 Mar and captures data on the impact of Brexit on working in the EU and travelling and working in non-EU countries, including mobility, visas, the movement of instruments and equipment, tax, social security and healthcare. The survey is available at [bit.ly/ISMBrexitSurvey20](http://bit.ly/ISMBrexitSurvey20).



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS



INSPIRING CHORAL LEADERSHIP

### Cambiata NW Boys' Singing Workshops

8 Mar, Macclesfield

Cambiata North West is a singing initiative for boys aged 10-18, which encourages as many boys as possible to keep singing while at secondary school.

### Spring Initial Course

21 Mar, 25 Apr, 13 Jun and 4 Jul, London

Tutors include Lucy Griffiths and Mark Jordan.

### Emerging/Progressive Course

14-15 Mar, 6-7 Jun, 12-13 Sep, London

The Emerging Course is designed for those with experience in singing and/or conducting, while the Progressive Course is for those who work with at least one choir on a regular basis.

### 'Conductor Toolkit' Weekend

28-29 Mar, Leeds

Presenters include Kevin O'Carroll, covering voicing and blend, and top barbershop chorus the White Rosettes. Jordan Travis returns for sessions on the ageing voice, vocal technique and effective choral warm-ups.

### Basic Conducting Skills Day

16 May, Leeds

For new conductors, or those with some experience already who want to back it up with training. Led by Sue Hollingworth.

### 35th Annual Convention: The *abcd* Choral Leaders' Festival

28-30 Aug, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Choirs include S:t Jacobs Vokalensemble (Sweden) and Latvian Voices.

For details of all events, including online booking where applicable, and general information about *abcd*, visit [abcd.org.uk](http://abcd.org.uk)

## CELEBRATING LIFE



COURTESY/ROBIN JÉQUIER

▲ 'Inspirational': Dinah Molloy-Thompson

A CELEBRATION OF DINAH MOLLOY-THOMPSON'S life will be held on 24 March in London, organised by the Eric Thompson Trust for Organists and Organ Music.

Following her husband Eric's death in

1992, Molloy-Thompson founded the Trust in 1993 to commemorate his life and work. She died in October 2019, and the event at the Dutch Church will celebrate her life through words and music.

Since the Trust was founded, it has supported over 100 young organists, many of whom now hold prestigious positions in cathedrals, colleges, churches and schools. This support comes through grants which enable aspiring organists to attend masterclasses, summer schools, or lessons from distinguished teachers outside regular studies.

The Trust's chairman, Robin Jéquier, told *C&O*, 'Dinah was an inspirational supporter of the Trust's work. She and her husband had a long association with the Dutch Church in London, where Eric's memorial service was held in 1992, so it's especially fitting to celebrate Dinah's life there. It will be our opportunity to commemorate her many achievements in music and other areas.'

The event takes place from 12.30-2pm at the Dutch Church, 7 Austin Friars, London EC2N 2HA on Tuesday 24 March. Admission is free, with a retiring collection; attendance should be registered in advance at [organ.eventbrite.co.uk](http://organ.eventbrite.co.uk). [organtrust.org](http://organtrust.org)



NICK RUTTER

Record label Gimell marks its 40th anniversary by releasing a high-resolution download of its first recording, *Allegri's Miserere* performed by The Tallis Scholars (pictured). Released on 20 Mar, the download is newly re-mastered from the original analogue session tapes from March 1980. It will be available from the Hyperion Records website and other download stores; it will also be available on iTunes and Apple Music. [gimell.com](http://gimell.com)

# SEVEN SISTERS

BBC RADIO 3 HAS COMMISSIONED A CHORAL WORK in celebration of female creativity to mark International Women's Day 2020. Seven female composers of different generations have been invited to write a movement of an a cappella work for choir, entitled *Seven Ages of Woman*.

The choice of texts represents the composers' own decades, spanning from 1944 to 2002, taking in the poetry of Christina Rossetti and Charlotte Brontë, to that written by commissioned composer Deirdre Gribbin's son, who has Down's syndrome. Each composer represents her own decade, from Helena Paish in her teenage years, to Rhian Samuel, who has written the final movement.

Following a free public concert with the BBC Singers under Grace Rossiter at St Peter's, Eaton Square, London, on 27 February, the commission will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 at 1pm on International Women's Day, Sunday 8 March. During the concert, the composers speak to presenter Fiona Talkington about their personal takes on their positions as women in 2020, and how this inspired their work.

The seven composers are Helena Paish, winner of BBC Proms Inspire composing competition and former Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year; BBC Proms Inspire Ambassador Electra Perivolaris; RPS Composition Prize winner Samantha Fernando; Emily Hall, who has composed five critically-acclaimed operas; winner of the Arts Foundation Opera Award Deirdre Gribbin; award-winning composer Cecilia McDowall; and Rhian Samuel, who co-edited the *Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*.

Radio 3 content editor Edwina Wolstencroft said, 'We're delighted to again focus on the extraordinary talent of female composers as we internationally mark the progress made, and work still to do, in achieving full equality for women.'



SIM CAHNEY/CLARKE

▲ The BBC Singers will premiere the commission, broadcast on Radio 3 on 8 March

Also in the programme are Judith Bingham's *Gleams of a remoter world*, Joanna Gill's *Unfailing love*, Abbie Betinis's *God of Owls*, and Errollyn Wallen's *Pace*. The broadcast forms part of a day-long schedule of programmes on Radio 3 for International Women's Day, including Choral Evensong from the Chapel of The Queen's College, Oxford at 3pm. [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk)

## APPOINTMENTS & AWARDS

**Ruth Evans** has been appointed as the National Youth Choir of Great Britain's (NYCGB) new head of artistic planning and participation. The role will include extending the reach of NYCGB's engagement and learning programmes. Evans was formerly senior education projects manager at Glyndebourne Opera House.

Organist and conductor **Anna Lapwood** has become the youngest bye-fellow at Pembroke College, Cambridge. She has been director of music at Pembroke since 2016 and this honorary position sees her join the cohort of fellows and senior members at the College. Lapwood said, 'I feel honoured to have been recognised in this way by Pembroke College and look forward to

continuing to build up a rich, outward-facing music department within the College.'

The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD) has appointed **Tim Rhys-Evans** as its new director of music. Rhys-Evans, who founded the Welsh male-voice choir Only Men Aloud, will assume the role in April, while continuing his work with the Only Aloud charity. He has previously worked with Welsh National Opera, Welsh National Youth Opera and Youth Opera Northern Ireland.

Létourneau Pipe Organs has announced the appointment of **Andrew Forrest** to the position of vice-president, in addition to his current responsibilities as artistic

director. Létourneau's president, Dr Dudley Oakes, said, 'I have known Andrew through Létourneau for 20 years now and it has been a pleasure to watch him grow into this role. I look forward to the continuation of our long and productive association.'

On 31 January, the NYCGB announced the four composers selected to join the second edition of its **Young Composer Scheme**. The successful applicants were Nathan James Dearden (27), Amy Bryce (25), Lisa Robertson (26), and Joseph Bates (28). The scheme offers four composers aged 18-29 a fully funded, year-long programme of professional development, including the opportunity to write music for NYCGB's choirs.



## OSLO CHURCH MUSIC FESTIVAL

ANN KRISTIN ENGBÅKKEN



▲ The Norwegian Girls' Choir premiering *Sirkling* by Maja Tatkje in Ris Church at the 2019 festival

THE 2020 OSLO INTERNATIONAL CHURCH MUSIC FESTIVAL takes place from 13-23 March, *writes Clare Stevens*. The festival celebrates its 20th anniversary with the premiere of a new *St Matthew Passion* by the Danish composer Bent Sørensen, commissioned by the festival and performed on 22 March in Oslo Cathedral by the Norwegian Soloists' Choir and Ensemble Allegria, under the direction of Grete Pedersen.

The new work is written for string orchestra, ten wind instruments and an eight-part choir, divided into two groups that are placed far apart in the church. Four

solo roles will be filled by vocalists from the Soloists' Choir. The text, curated by Jakob Holtze, includes material from both the gospels of St Matthew and St John, together with extracts from traditional Mass texts and poetry by Edith Södergran, Anna Akhmatova, Emily Dickinson and Danish lyricist Søren Ulrik Thomsen, among others.

The festival opens with Beethoven's *Missa solennis*, performed on 13 March, also in Oslo Cathedral, by the French orchestra Le Cercle de l'Harmonie and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, supported by a new ensemble of young Norwegian choral

singers and an international team of soloists, directed by Jérémie Rhorer.

Artistic director Bente Johnsrud said, 'An important theme of this year's festival is human rights – issues related to their violation, and the lack of religious freedom in Norway and internationally. We highlight a number of projects that draw parallels in time and space, from the Middle Ages to our times, from Iran to Norway, from Tønsberg to Spain, from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, from Protestants to Catholics, from Islam to Christianity.

'We meet the musician and philanthropist Jordi Savall and his Orpheus XXI project, which consists of musicians who have had to flee their respective homelands because of war and religious conflicts. Iranian Marjan Vahdat gives us an insight into her life and her country's music and poetry; Cappella Mariana from the Czech Republic describe freedom of religion between Catholics and Protestants in 17th-century Bohemia; and the story of our Norwegian Princess Kristina of Tønsberg, who was forcibly married in Spain in 1257, is told by Eduardo Paniagua and his ensemble Música Antigua.'

Oslo Chamber Choir and conductor Håkon Daniel Nystedt will give a concert celebrating Norwegian church music, and the programme also includes the world premiere of *12 Folk Song Preludes for Large Organ*, composed and performed by cathedral cantor Kåre Nordstoga; an organ masterclass and recital by Frédéric Blanc; eleven Festival High Masses spread over two Sundays; and a children's choir event. [oicmf.no](http://oicmf.no)

Preparations are currently under way for Carol Williams's debut recital at London's Royal Festival Hall. The recital on 20 April – part of Southbank Centre's International Organ Series – presents Jazz Organ Classics, with works by Brubeck, BB King and Hendrix, among others; the centrepiece will be Giles Swayne's *Riff-Raff*. Williams told C&O, 'My choice for the programme is not the typical classical organ concert. This performance will encompass jazz and blues influences, as well as my own composition, which has been specifically written for this RFH event.' [southbankcentre.co.uk](http://southbankcentre.co.uk)



# NURTURING YOUNG TALENT



▲ Fostering 'all-round' musicians: the Jennifer Bate Organ Academy runs from 31 March to 4 April in Surrey

THE 16TH JENNIFER BATE ORGAN ACADEMY (JBOA) will take place at St Catherine's School, Bramley, Surrey, from 31 March to 4 April.

The Academy, which is supported by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, was founded by Jennifer Bate to encourage girls to study the instrument. The course – open to all abilities, from beginners to those preparing for conservatoire auditions and RCO examinations – covers a range of topics, including repertoire, improvisation, ensemble performance, choral direction, continuo, and service accompaniment.

The broadness of its brief, Bate told *C&O*, is because her aim was always for the 'all-round' musician: 'JBOA was a development of lots of different experiences I'd had in my professional life. I knew that an organist is not just an organist.' The course offers many disciplines that organists might meet in the course of their career. Furthermore, as each student brings their own repertoire to the classes, there is no competitiveness in the sessions; rather, Bate explained, 'Everyone assists their fellow participants and is taught to co-operate in every discipline.'

The course includes a full Choral Evensong; a choral day with a semi-professional choir, during which everyone has to sing, conduct and accompany; service accompaniment; and a concerto day, for which each student performs a solo movement of an 18th-/early 19th-century work, prepared in advance. Bate explained, 'Each participant then learns how to play this in the correct style and how to conduct the orchestra from the keyboard. They also discover the etiquette of how to run a successful rehearsal. Our orchestra has a solid professional core. As many candidates also play orchestral instruments (which they are encouraged to bring), they benefit from additional opportunities sitting next to great players. Because our course also includes harmony, figured bass and harpsichord training, this concerto course offers a chance to put all these skills into action.'

'More recent additions to the course,' Bate continued, 'have included handbell ringing (splendid for coordination) and a wonderful class on the harmonium, which not only teaches great sensitivity in playing, but which also reveals how the inner workings of the instrument make all this important repertoire come to life.' This year, Geoffrey Morgan will be running a course on psalmody.

Bate concluded, 'I would say that this course has opened up many to follow their dreams and ambitions, and given them new experiences which they have pursued. We have an impressive number who have gone on to be Oxbridge organ scholars or who went to the leading colleges of music. One of our students now runs music in Leicester and returned to us as a tutor; another is now director of music at Pembroke College, Cambridge.' [stcatherines.info/jboa](mailto:stcatherines.info/jboa)

## EVENTS

**Organ Reframed**, an experimental organ festival, takes place at London's Union Chapel from 27-28 Mar (see feature p.43).

The **London Handel Festival** will run from 5 Mar-10 Apr under the theme 'Handel and the Hanoverians'. (see feature p.43).

The 500th anniversary celebrations of the **Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula HM Tower of London** continue with a performance by the Choir of the Chapels Royal of J.S. Bach's *St John Passion* (11am, 29 Mar). Entry is free, but email [administrator@hrp.org.uk](mailto:administrator@hrp.org.uk) to register attendance. [hrp.org.uk](http://hrp.org.uk)

Forthcoming **Royal College of Organists** events include: AGM and Conferment (7 Mar, London); Exploring Victorian and Edwardian organ music (14 Mar, Glasgow); Develop your sight-reading and transposition (14 Mar, London); Confident performing (21 Mar, Norwich); Play Bach (even better!) (21 Mar, London); TOSE-in-a-day (21 Mar, London); Contemporary organ music (28 Mar, Worcestershire). [rco.org.uk](http://rco.org.uk)

Pembroke College, Cambridge presents its third **Festival of Voice** (28 Feb-3 Mar), celebrating art-song, poetry, choral music and community, under the artistic directorship of Joseph Middleton and Anna Lapwood. Concerts, masterclasses, Festival Evensong, and a Mozart Requiem Come and Sing for amateur singers. [cambridgelivetrust.co.uk](http://cambridgelivetrust.co.uk)

Twelve-year-old treble **Cai Thomas** is to release his debut solo album on 27 Mar. Funded through a Kickstarter campaign and produced by Simon Kiln, *Seren* will be released on Rubicon Classics. The album includes works by Eriks Ešenvalds, Vaughan Williams, Handel, Karl Jenkins, Ola Gjeilo, Fauré, and Mozart, among others. Cai has sung with the Choir of St Thomas-on-the-Bourne since the age of 7 and was a finalist in BBC Radio 2's Young Chorister of the Year 2019. [caithomas.co.uk](http://caithomas.co.uk)



## JAM TURNS 20

THE JOHN ARMITAGE MEMORIAL TRUST (JAM) celebrates its 20th anniversary with a 2020 season launch concert in London on Thursday 19 March.

The concert showcases a programme of commissioned and submitted works. Closing in December 2019, last year's Call for Music provided five pieces for the concert, which are to be performed alongside Paul Mealor's 2010 commission, *Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal*, Julian Philips's 2012 commission, *Body of Water*, and the London premiere of Daniel Saleeb's *Soliloquy* (2019). Performers include the Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, conducted by Michael Bawtree, Onyx Brass, Phil Durrant (tenor) and Simon Hogan (organ).

JAM was set up in 2000 by Edward Armitage (see p.98), Charles Cochrane and Timothy Jackson in memory of Edward's father, John, with the aim of enabling, promoting, commissioning and supporting new music in the UK. Since then, JAM has been involved in performances of more than 130 new works, including over 30 commissions, through year-round concerts and its multi-arts festival JAM on the Marsh, founded in 2014. JAM's annual Call for Music invites submissions for choir, brass quintet and organ, or a combination of any of these forces.



SUSAN PILCHER

▲ JAM's London launch concert on 19 March features the Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge

Edward Armitage, JAM's chairman and artistic director, told C&O: 'The heart and soul of JAM is 19 March – it's a brilliant concert.' From 1-11 July, JAM on the Marsh takes place on the Romney Marshes in Kent. 'Enabling new music is the absolute core of JAM: it's fundamentally still a new music organisation, that stage-left has sprouted a 23-event, 11-day festival, covering all the arts.'

JAM is an advocate for repeat performances of new works, with some

pieces having been performed 30 times in locations across the globe. Previous commissions include works by Rory Boyle, Jonathan Dove, Judith Bingham and Gabriel Jackson. Alongside new music, JAM is dedicated to education and has worked with children in primary schools since 2012.

JAM's launch concert takes place at 7.30pm on Thursday 19 March at St Bride's, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8AU. [jamconcert.org](http://jamconcert.org)

### PREMIERES [RP = REGIONAL PREMIERE]

**Roderick Williams: Ave maris stella**  
Belgravia Chamber Orchestra, Schola Cantorum of Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School/Price  
3 Mar, Cadogan Hall, London, UK

**Gerald Barry: Oh Lord, how vain** [RP]  
BBC Singers/Palmer  
4 Mar, St Giles' Cripplegate, London, UK

**Brian Chapple: The Lord's Prayer**  
Choir of Canterbury Cathedral/Flood  
14 Mar, Canterbury Cathedral, UK

**Kathryn Rose: The hand that made us divine**  
**Richard Peat: In drifts of sleep**  
Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge/Bawtree  
19 Mar, St Bride's, Fleet Street, London, UK

**Philip Lancaster: Carol of the Passion**  
Onyx Brass, Simon Hogan (org)  
19 Mar, St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London, UK

**Osamu Kawakami: Chor Rhinogradentia**  
Vox Humana/Wismath  
21 Mar, Yokohama Minato Mirai Hall, Yokohama, JP

**Will Todd: We are laid asleep**  
**Tasmin Jones: The Daffodils**  
**Ian Hare: Springtime in Lakeland**  
Cumbria Rural Choirs/Wright  
21 Mar, Carlisle Cathedral, UK

**Stephen McNeff: The Horizons of Doubt**  
BBC Singers/Halls  
27 Mar, St Paul's Knightsbridge, London, UK

**Alison Willis: Salve Deus, Rex Judaeorum**  
Luminosa Voices/Abbott  
28 Mar, All Saints, Odiham, Hampshire, UK

**Cheryl Francis-Hoad: As sin is nothing, let it nowhere be**  
Lincoln's Inn Choir  
29 Mar, Lincoln's Inn Chapel, London, UK

Please email items for News and Letters to the Editor for publication in future issues to [maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com](mailto:maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com), or post to The Editor, Choir & Organ, Mark Allen Group, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB, UK.

## The British Institute of Organ Studies

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Some make regular use of the online National Pipe Organ Register to find details on a particular instrument, including if it has been awarded a Historic Organ Certificate. The Historic Organ Sound Archive is also available online.

Our British Organ Archive based at Birmingham University holds much material about organbuilders and their activities, and our internationally respected academic Journal and our Reporter newsletter can be invaluable reference tools, or just interesting reading!

Whatever your interest in pipe organs, BIOS has something to offer. Browse at [www.bios.org.uk](http://www.bios.org.uk) for more information.

## Scattered leaves ... from our Scrapbook



A master gave a recital last evening in Music Hall. The voice is one of the loveliest to be heard in the world today. In range it is virtually limitless, its depth being of wondrous warmth and richness, its middle portion brilliant and vibrant, yet filled with a sympathy and nobility that charm, and its upper tone being of a clarity, a sweetness and an exquisite fineness that ravish the sense. In volume it is full and strong, capable of voicing of the most intense emotion and dramatic feeling when these are demanded, and yet when the master owner wishes it, sinks down to the softest possible *pianissimo*, and back of this voice is an artist and a personality.

Who was the singer?

Fritz Kreisler.

It is true that it was the voice of his violin that sang, but that fact makes him none the less a Master Singer (*Meistersänger*).

W.L. Hubbard  
Chicago Tribune  
January 8, 1908



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# Colin Mawby

## 1936 – 2019

Colin Mawby's long and distinguished career as a conductor and composer enriched the lives of many who knew him.

Born in Portsmouth in 1936, Colin John Beverley Mawby was a chorister at Westminster Cathedral under George Malcolm, whose pioneering approach to training boys' voices was something Mawby experienced personally. Malcolm listened to boys playing football and claimed, 'Good singing must be a controlled form of shouting.' Mawby would later return to Westminster Cathedral as Master of Music, continuing and consolidating the Malcolm legacy.

Not long after Mawby left Westminster as a chorister, he went to the Royal College of Music – aged 15 – to study organ with Richard Latham and composition with Gordon Jacob. While at the RCM, Mawby was directing the music at Our Lady of the Assumption and St Gregory's Warwick Street, Westminster. This was followed

Mawby's natural, instinctive musicianship was central to the Choir's increasing success and profile; archive recordings of Mawby's tenure at Westminster demonstrate his very considerable skills as a choir trainer. It was during his time that the Cathedral began confronting the liturgical upheaval following the Second Vatican Council. He left in 1975, not long after Basil Hume was appointed Archbishop of Westminster. Hume was quoted about his own position with regard to the radical changes taking place in the RC Church: 'My head is progressive, but my heart is conservative.' If that was a dichotomy for Cardinal Hume, then so it was for Colin Mawby. For in spite of producing vast amounts of vernacular psalms, antiphons and Masses for a changing liturgy, Mawby was uncomfortable about the direction in which the RC Church was going, leaving the Cathedral in 1975. His legacy was enormous, as I realised when I became Master of Music in 1982, following a distinguished three years by Sir

### Mawby's style has a rich harmonic core ... carefully and imaginatively structured

by a spell as choirmaster at Portsmouth Cathedral and St Ann's, Vauxhall before returning to Westminster Cathedral in 1959 to assist Francis Cameron. He succeeded Cameron as Master of Music in 1961, and remained there until 1975. In addition to his work at Westminster Cathedral, he proved a fine writer, a frequent broadcaster and was the founding conductor of the Westminster String Orchestra. Other work included directing the London Mozart Players, Pro Cantione Antiqua, the BBC Singers and the Belgian Radio Choir.

During Mawby's time at Westminster Cathedral, the boys and men of the Choir would sing around 15 services a week, which included High Mass, Vespers and Compline on most days. It was surely the busiest cathedral choir in the world, and

Stephen Cleobury. Soon after I started, the Cathedral agreed that we should continue commissioning works from Colin, clearly one of the most gifted liturgical composers of his time. He was incredibly enthusiastic to be invited to compose again for his 'old' choir, and one of the finest works he produced was a setting of the Mass for choir, organ and congregation, at which Cardinal Hume was celebrant. It was as if Mawby had come to terms with how music in the liturgy could be renewed, accessible and richly appreciated by the musicians and congregation alike. He was warmly and frequently welcomed back to the Cathedral community, accepting the hand of friendship; Cardinal Hume was thrilled that there had been, ultimately, a rebuilding of trust and friendship.



BENJAMIN DAHLHOFF

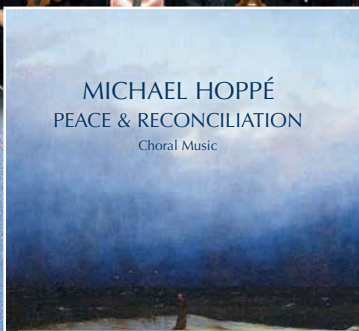
From 1975-81, Mawby was a professor at Trinity College of Music. In 1981 he was appointed artistic director of the National Chamber Choir of Ireland, a fully professional choir and one of Europe's finest. He, along with the choir, grew an international reputation for their exciting programming and educational work, particularly with underprivileged children. He had a spell of three years as composer-in-association at the Pro-Cathedral in Dublin, during which time he wrote psalm and alleluia settings and a characteristically innovative work, *Come Christians All*. This was written for the inaugural Mass celebrating the newly formed girls' choir in 2009. His style has a rich harmonic core, compositions always carefully and imaginatively structured and underpinned with an enviable compositional fluency. There are numerous settings of the Mass, three children's operas, motets, antiphons, psalms, organ music and a striking *Te Deum* he wrote for Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral in 2017. In 2006, he was awarded a Knighthood of the Papal Order of St Gregory by Pope Benedict XVI for his services to church music. He died on 24 November 2019. ■

David Hill



# MICHAEL HOPPÉ

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# Tested by time

Since its birth amid the turbulence of 1948, the RIAS Kammerchor has gone from strength to strength. **Clare Stevens** traces its rise from the ashes of the second world war to international renown

**I**t is very rare indeed for me to listen to a CD track on repeat, but that is what I found myself doing nearly 20 years ago when I first heard the RIAS Kammerchor of Berlin's 2001 recording of Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle*. I was completely captivated by the exuberant Kyrie, and found myself listening to it over and over again.

Admittedly, it was the characterful instrumental introduction, played by Philip Mayers and Philip Moll on Pleyel pianos of 1869 and 1858 respectively, with Ryoko Morooka on a Debain harmonium of 1869, that initially seduced my ear, but the choir picked up the style effortlessly, with nimble changes of tempo and vocal

colour that completely won me over to a work I had previously found unappealing. Now it would be one of my desert island choices, as long as this recording were provided.

The RIAS Kammerchor's most recent disc, of Haydn's little-known *Missa Cellensis*, is equally impressive (see review, *C&O* January 2020). In between, they have produced an extensive catalogue of recordings, ranging from Haydn's *The Seasons*, J.C. Bach's Requiem and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, to three one-act operas by Ernst Krenek, Tan Dun's *Water Passion* and Wolfgang Rihm's *Astralis*. An international jury invited by *Gramophone* magazine in 2011 to choose their top 20 choirs in the

▲ Justin Doyle conducts the RIAS Kammerchor, noted for its 'remarkably homogenous sound and terrific power'



◀ world put RIAS at No.9. The citation praised the choir for its 'remarkably homogenous sound and terrific power' and continued: 'They sing a wide repertoire and bring a great sense of bite and concentration of sound that makes a deep impression in music as different as Mozart's *Idomeneo* and Frank Martin's *Golgotha*.'

The acronym RIAS stands for Radio In the American Sector, and the choir's development is rooted in the political history of its home city. At the end of the second world war, Germany was split between the USA, UK, Russia and France into four zones of occupation; then

Berlin Radio was initially controlled by the Soviet authorities, but in 1946 the American authorities supported the foundation of a new radio station: Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor (Broadcasting in the American Sector). The baritone and conductor Herbert Froitzheim was given the task of setting up a professional chamber choir on behalf of the station, and on 15 October 1948 the RIAS Kammerchor was born, originally known as the Rundfunkchor.

Froitzheim was succeeded as principal conductor by Günther Arndt, who was at the helm for 18 years and

## 'I love this choir's beautiful, chocolatey homogeneous sound, but sometimes I want to dirty it up a bit' – Justin Doyle

▼ Building a reputation, and a family, over the decades: (clockwise, from top left) former conductors Herbert Froitzheim (second left), Günther Arndt and Uwe Gronostay (fourth and third from right) join in the choir's 25th anniversary celebrations; founder-conductor Froitzheim with the choir in 1949; Gronostay (far left) and the choir in the studio, 1972; Froitzheim conducts the choir in the early 1950s

in 1949 the British, French and American zones were amalgamated to form the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the Soviet zone became the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Berlin was now an island within the eastern Communist state. East Berlin became the capital of the GDR, while the capital of the FRG moved to Bonn, leaving west Berlin as a separate enclave of western Germany – an isolation that was later reinforced by the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

placed particular emphasis on contemporary music, such as a recording of Schoenberg's Hebrew setting of Psalm 50, just eight years after it was written, as part of a project focusing on music of the Second Viennese School. A landmark during Arndt's tenure was a performance of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' with the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Herbert von Karajan, to inaugurate the city's new concert hall, the Philharmonie, where the choir has performed regularly ever since.



COURTESY RIAS KAMMERCHOR



COURTESY RIAS KAMMERCHOR



COURTESY RIAS KAMMERCHOR



COURTESY RIAS KAMMERCHOR



► The 2020 New Year's Day performance of Handel's *Messiah*, for which Justin Doyle prepared by referring to the composer's original score

Uwe Gronostay, principal conductor from 1972-86, is credited with introducing a historical performance strand to the RIAS Kammerchor's work, and with developing the sleek but powerful sound of the 36-voice choir. Marcus Creed, in charge from 1987 to 2001, brought together the early and contemporary music strands while nurturing that distinctive sound, and gave RIAS a truly international profile.

Alto Waltraud Heinrich has been a member of the choir for 33 years, joining at around the same time as Creed's appointment. She admits that it was a challenge to meet his phenomenally high standards, but one that she relished and which nurtured her development as a singer. 'Marcus was responsible for bringing the music of Handel to Berlin, with the period instruments of Akademie für Alte Musik (Akamus) – he had such love for it, and really brought it alive. *Israel in Egypt* and *Jephtha* were particular highlights. But I also really enjoyed working with him on things like Krenek's 12-tone *Lamentations*, and Ligeti's *Hölderlin Fantasies*. I was quite intimidated by the idea of singing such difficult contemporary music, but Marcus encouraged me to be brave and believe I could do it. He taught me how to sing Stockhausen with the same ease as I could sing Bach.'

Creed's successor, Daniel Reuss, spent just three years with the choir. 'Daniel wanted a more romantic sound,' says Heinrich. 'He encouraged us to open up our voices, and he was the sort of conductor who always found another level in a performance, no matter how carefully he had rehearsed with us. But he would have liked to be able to reduce the size of the choir for some repertoire, which wasn't possible because of the German contract system.'

Reuss was followed from 2007-15 by Hans-Christoph Rademann, who expanded the choir's expressive range in terms of both its sound and its repertoire, placing particular emphasis on central German music history from the 17th to the 19th century. 'Hans-Christoph also did lots of romantic repertoire with us – we did *Elijah* twice,' Heinrich recalls. 'But we also recorded the Bach motets with him, which was very satisfying. He also brought a little bit of magic to performances – perhaps sometimes he left a little too much to the last minute, so it felt a bit risky, but with repertoire like the Bach motets that we know so well it was fine.'

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany, the RIAS broadcasting station was absorbed into a new Deutschlandradio, but the choir kept its name and identity. It is now one of four ensembles administered by Rundfunk Orchester und Chöre GmbH Berlin, whose stakeholders are



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◀ Deutschlandradio, the Federal Republic of Germany, the State of Berlin and Radio Berlin-Brandenburg. The Rundfunk or Berlin Radio Choir, until recently directed by Simon Halsey, is a symphonic chorus of 60 voices. Having two professional choirs – not to mention two opera choruses – means there can be enormous flexibility in the city's concert programming. RIAS works frequently with conductors such as Simon Rattle, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, René Jacobs, Iván Fischer, and Kaspars Putniņš, with whom in May 2019 they premiered *Goetia: 72 in umbra Lucis*, an extended piece for choir and string quartet by the Russian-American composer Lera Auerbach.

The current chief conductor of the RIAS Kammerchor is Justin Doyle, in post since 2017. Born in Lancaster, he is proud of his roots in northern England and has strong musical links with Manchester (where he has conducted the Hallé and Manchester Camerata and was musical director of Manchester Chamber Choir) and Leeds (where he is a frequent guest conductor with Opera North); but his specialist musical training began as a chorister at Westminster Cathedral, London, under Stephen Cleobury and David Hill, and he was a choral scholar at King's College, Cambridge.

Although it is still early days, Doyle has clearly forged a strong relationship with the RIAS choir. When Waltraud Heinrich and her baritone colleague Matthias Lutze are asked about their experiences of working with distinguished guest conductors, their first response is, 'We would love to have Justin conducting us all the

time!' They relish his ability to communicate effectively with both singers and instrumentalists, drawing on his own experience as a cellist as well as his understanding of vocal technique and his remarkable knowledge of a very wide range of choral repertoire. They also appreciate Doyle's attention to detail; even for a work as familiar as *Messiah*, which the choir performed with Akamus in this year's New Year's Day concert in the Philharmonie, he went back to the original score and tried to fathom Handel's intentions, bringing a freshness and excitement to his interpretation that inspired the musicians as much as the audience.

Doyle himself enjoys the luxury of having slightly more rehearsal time than is possible with UK choirs. 'The process isn't as quick, but it is deeper, and means we can actually spend 15 minutes on a couple of chords, or on deconstructing a *Messiah* chorus and singing it Swingle-style; we can think about what Handel and his librettist Jennens were actually saying and the story they were telling, and bring it to life.

'I love this choir's beautiful, chocolatey homogeneous sound,' he adds, 'but sometimes I want to dirty it up a bit. I love putting together programmes that juxtapose music by very different composers and seeing how I can change the sound – these singers are like chameleons, and they can always do it!' ■

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Clare Stevens works as a writer, editor and publicist in the Welsh Marches, where she sings with Hereford Choral Society.



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# Polish dynasty

In the second part of our survey of Polish organ building in the 17th and 18th centuries, **Krzysztof Urbaniak** turns to the influential Nitrowski family – three generations of craftsmen whose instruments were found throughout the country. IMAGES COURTESY OF KRZYSZTOF URBANIAK





◀ The organ of Koniecpol (c.1641), by an unknown builder, bears great similarities to the instruments from the direct circle of Georg Nitrowski

cases, their tonal composition, wind-chest construction and details of their pipework. Initially active in southern Poland, the German-speaking Nitrowskis ultimately settled in Gdańsk, from where they were able to send prefabricated parts of their organs via the Wisła river to far-flung destinations. A separate branch of the same family – the Brandtners – was active in Toruń, where they built instruments for the cities of central Poland. In the 17th century, the most important Polish cathedrals and collegiate churches boasted organs built either by the Nitrowski or Brandtner families. Their organs could be heard from Kraków in the south, in Sandomierz, Gniezno, Włocławek and Poznań, and as far north as Frombork and Gdańsk on the Baltic coast. Inevitably

good references, Nitrowski was tasked with completing Hummel's third unfinished project, which was in Kraków's most important church, St Mary's. The preserved contract from 1638 includes the specification and reveals other interesting details of the project. The final payments to Nitrowski were made in 1641.

At the beginning of his career, Nitrowski settled in Olkusz but, by 1640, he was already a citizen of Kraków and married to Magdalena Langen, daughter of a certain Jan Lang, who was also a citizen of Kraków. The hypothesis forwarded by Aleksander Poliński in 1907, connecting Nitrowski's activities in 1642 with Warsaw, then Poland's new capital, has until now not been confirmed by any archival findings, but is highly probable. By 1649 he was based in Gdańsk. His exact route to this city remains a mystery, but may lie in the close contact between the Nitrowski

## Their organs could be heard from Kraków in the south to the cities on the Baltic coast

altered in the 19th century, and largely destroyed during the second world war, almost all of Nitrowski's organs in northern Poland disappeared. Fortunately, however, instruments both from the Nitrowski family and from their circle do survive in southern and central Poland. However, the only one of these currently in a fully restored state and with its original meantone temperament is that at Olkusz, described in Part 1 of this series. During preparations for the restoration project there, the detailed biographies of the family members and the histories of their individual instruments underwent systematic research in the archives of Kraków, Levoča, Sandomierz, Kielce, Katowice, Gdańsk, Lviv and Berlin, revealing a unique glimpse into a bygone age.

### Georg Nitrowski (c.1608-c.1680) – father of a dynasty

Following the death of his teacher Hans Hummel in 1630, Georg Nitrowski was given the task of completing his master's unfinished organs in Levoča and Olkusz. Nitrowski's apprenticeship under Hummel began in 1624, which implies that Georg was most likely born around 1608. Having completed both commissions, and surely armed with

family and the famed goldsmith Andreas Mackensen the Elder. He had met Georg and his wife in Kraków and was godfather to Georg's son Andreas. Mackensen was active in Kraków before 1628, settling in Gdańsk in 1643 and becoming *servitor* to the Polish kings Władysław IV Vasa and later Jan Kazimierz Vasa. Perhaps it was Mackensen who helped Nitrowski and his family find their way to Gdańsk.

Nitrowski's first commission in Gdańsk was a new organ in an old case for St Catherine's, an instrument with a specification very similar to that of the organs at Olkusz and St Mary's in Kraków. The organ at St Catherine's heralded many other projects. These included the 1652 restoration of the main organ at St Mary's in Gdańsk, the new organ for St Bartholomew's in Gdańsk (1658-60), new organs for Gniezno Cathedral (1654-62) and Poznań Cathedral and, finally, a largely new organ in an older case for St Mary's in Gdańsk (1672-74), the family's largest organ. This latter instrument, most likely the final large organ by Georg Nitrowski, was built in collaboration with his son Andreas (from Georg's first marriage) and Johann Balthasar Held, who would later become an important figure in the workshop of Arp Schnitger. ▶

The name Nitrowski is probably as important for 17th-century Polish organ building as the name Schnitger for the north German and Dutch organ landscape of the same period. Three generations of this renowned dynasty equipped vast territories of the First Polish Republic with new organs. These were built according to original concepts, clearly distinguishable from other baroque European organ types through the design of their



## Church of the Holy Trinity, Konieczpol

ANON. (1641), SCHOOL OF GEORG NITROWSKI

(original stoplist)

**MANUAL**

(C, D, E, F, G, A-c3)

Principal	8*
Fleit wielki	8*
Salicinal	8*
Gembshorn	8*
Octawa	4*
Quinta	3*
Quindecima	2*
Mixtura [?]	[2?]*
[Cymbał V?]	
[Puzan	8]

**POZYTYW**

(C, D, E, F, G, A-c3)

Quintadena	8*
Principal	4*
Fleit octawný	4*
Spilflait octawný	4*
Octawa	2*
[Flecik mnieiszý?	2?]
?	?
?	?

**PEDAŁ**

(C, D, E, F, G, A-c1, d1)

[Bas Wielki (open)	16]
Principal	8*
[Fleit or Salicinal	8]
Octava	4*
[Mixtura VI	4]
[Pomort?	16?]
[Cornet?	2]

6 bellows

\* Stops that survive with original pipework

## Cistercian Abbey, Wąchock

ANON. (C.1650), SCHOOL OF GEORG NITROWSKI

(original stoplist)

**MANUAL**

(C, D, E, F, G, A-c3)

Principal	8*
Fleit wielki	8*
Salicinal	8*
Gembshorn	8*
Octawa	4*
Quinta	3*
Quindecima	2*
Scadek	1*
Mixtura + Cymbał VI + III-V	2*

**POZYTYW**

(C, D, E, F, G, A-c3)

Quintadena	8*
Fleit	8*
Principal	4*
Salicinal	4*
[Fleit octawný?]	[4?]*
[Mixtura III	1?]
{ Gembshorn	4 (bass)* }
{ Puzanik	8 (treble)* }

**PEDAŁ**

(C, D, E, F, G, A-c1)

Sub Bas (open)	16*
Octava	8*
Fleit wielki	8*
Salicinal	8*
Quindecima	4*
Mixtura VI	4*
Puzan	8*
Cornet	2*

[4 bellows?]

\* Stops that survive with original pipework

## Frombork Cathedral

DANIEL NITROWSKI (1683-85)

(specification as recorded by Adam Gottlob Casparini in 1758)

**HAUPTWERK**

(C, D, E-c3)

Gedackt	16
Principal	8
Spielflöte	8
Salicinal	8
Hohlflaut	8
Octava	4
Qvinta	3
Super Octava	2
Sexqvalter	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub> , 1 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>5</sub>
Mixtura	2

**RÜCKPOSITIV**

(C, D, E-c3)

Flaut	8
Principal	4
Spiel flött	4
Salicinal	4
Flaut	4
Qvinta	3
Octava	2
Sexqvalter	?
Mixtura	[1?]
Trompet	8

**PEDAŁ**

(C, D, E-c1)

Principal Bass	16
Salicinal Bass	16
Subbass	16
Bourduin	16
Octava Bass	8
Super Octava	4
Rosqvint Bass	3
Mixtur bass	[4?]
Fagott	16
Trompet Bass	8

Tremulant

Pauken

Zimbel Stern

Sperr Ventil

## Sandomierz Cathedral

ANDREAS NITROWSKI AND MATTHÄUS BRANDTNER THE ELDER (1694-98)

(stoplist according to the original contract)

**MANUALL**

(C, D, E, F, G, A-c3)

Principall	8
Spil flött	8
Sallicinall	8
Holl flött	8
Quintadena	8
Octava	4
Quinta	3
Quindecima	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> [=2?]
Waldflött	2
Sedecima	1
Sexqealter	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> [II?]
Mixtura	VI [2?]

**POZYTYW TILNY**

(C, D, E, F, G, A-c3)

Flött	8
Principall	4
Spilflött	4
Sallicinall	4
Octawný flött	4
Octava	2
Skadek	1
Sexqealter	1 [II?]
Mixtura	III [1?]
Cymbalik	?

**PEDALL**

(C, D, E, F, G, A-c1)

Principall Subbasowy	16
Sallicinall	16
Bordun	16
Octava	8
Holl flött	8
Octava	4
Sexqealter	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> [II?]
Mixtura VI	4

◀ In 1650, Nitrowski's daughter Magdalena had been born; she would later marry the famous organ builder Matthäus Brandtner the Elder. Georg's son Andreas – probably born in Kraków – would go on to become a famous organ builder in his own right, while Daniel (baptised 1656), Georg's son from his second marriage, would also be active as an organ builder. Georg gradually involved Andreas in the family business and, ultimately, probably retired. His name is mentioned for the last time in 1680, in the documents of St Catherine's in Gdańsk.

**Andreas Nitrowski (before 1651-97)  
– adjunctus of Georg Nitrowski and  
servitor to the king**

Andreas must have been a very talented organ builder, and Georg engaged him regularly during his large-scale projects (Gniezno, Poznań, Gdańsk). In 1673, he married Elisabeth, daughter of Simon Lang, but no children from this marriage are known of. Apparently, Andreas was well connected to the highest echelons of government, where he enjoyed such a good reputation that, in 1678, the Polish king Jan III Sobieski granted him the status of a royal *servitor*, with privileges for the building of organs throughout the entire republic and for educating apprentices. Perhaps Andreas's godfather Mackensen, who was also linked with the most prominent clientele, played an important role in this regard. In preserved documents, Andreas is frequently referred to as 'Hr. Nitrowsky juniore', to distinguish him from his father. By 1683 Andreas was already collaborating with his younger brother Daniel, with whom he restored the small organ at St Mary's in Gdańsk. Among other subsequent projects were a new main organ and two chest organs for the collegiate church (today a cathedral) of Sandomierz, some 350 miles to the south-east of Gdańsk. The contract was signed in 1694 but Andreas died suddenly in 1697 during construction. The project was completed by Nitrowski's brother-in-law, Matthäus Brandtner the Elder. That same year, Andreas was also considered as a candidate for the completion of the organ of St Jacob's in Stettin, which had been interrupted in 1697 by the death of Matthias Schurig. In the end, however, this project was taken over by Arp Schnitger and the aforementioned Johann Balthasar Held.

**Daniel Nitrowski (1656-1714) –  
the younger son of Georg Nitrowski**

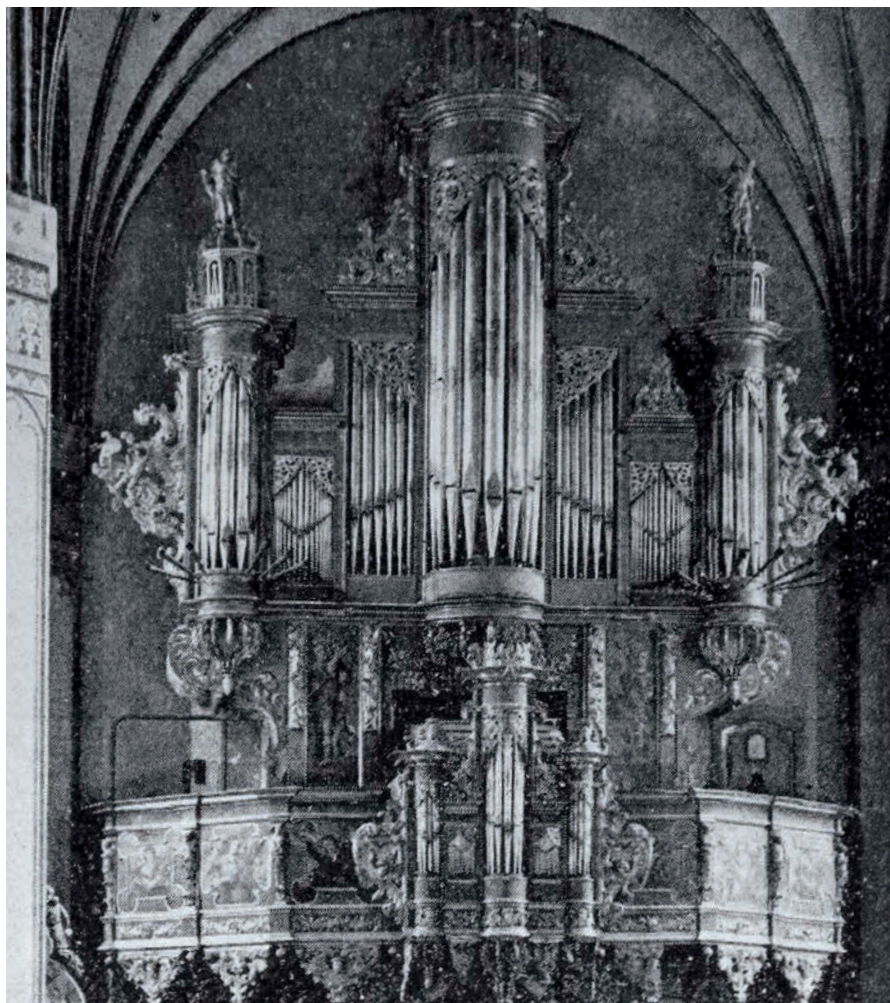
Daniel Nitrowski, the first child of his father's second marriage with Susanna Vogtin, must already have been active in the family's workshop by the late 1670s. For a while, Daniel remained in the shadow of his brother Andreas. Following his first large commission – a new organ for the cathedral in Frombork (1683), built according to the traditional layout of Olkusz, with a central pedal tower – Daniel gradually developed an independent career. Unlike his father and brother, Daniel's activity seems to have been limited to northern Poland and included restorations and modifications of existing organs, regular maintenance and the construction of smaller instruments. Daniel continued the tradition of his family's workshop, remaining faithful to its standardised specifications, designs and pipe forms. He built a number of chest organs, widely spread among the churches in

the villages around Gdańsk. The influences of the Schnitger tradition, which arrived in Gdańsk in the person of Andreas Hildebrandt in 1710, rendered Nitrowski's organs rather conservative, or even old-fashioned. Daniel Nitrowski died in 1714 and was buried in the family grave at St Catherine's in Gdańsk.

**Benjamin Nitrowski (1693-1761) –  
the last Nitrowski**

The last known organ builder of the Nitrowski family was born as the fourth child from Daniel Nitrowski's first marriage, with Catarina Elisabeth Günther. Benjamin was baptised in 1693 in St Bartholomew's in Gdańsk, where his grandfather had built the main organ between 1658 and 1660. The first trace of Benjamin's activity was discovered by Bartosz Skop, who found the organ bills from Stegna, where Daniel Nitrowski collaborated with his son in 1712. As in the case of his uncle Andreas, Benjamin worked for some time in ▶

▼ Daniel Nitrowski's organ for the cathedral in Frombork (1683), built according to the layout of Olkusz







▲ The organ in Wąchock is the best-preserved instrument from the Nitrowski school

◀ Elbląg, from 1723 onwards, and in Gdańsk where he built a new organ for St Michaelis in 1727. By this time, the influence and tradition of Andreas Hildebrandt, and other builders from his circle, was well established. As a result, the prospects for Benjamin to secure large-scale commissions for new instruments became ever more limited. Benjamin, nevertheless, was able to gain a 1742 restoration in Sobieszewo, perhaps his final project. His death in 1761 represented the end of the once-prominent organ building dynasty and the opportunity for others to flourish.

**Matthäus Brandtner the Elder (167?-1734) and Matthäus Brandtner the Younger (1695-177?) – a brilliant career in central Poland**

We can only assume that Matthäus Brandtner the Elder was educated within the circles of the Nitrowski family, most probably in the 1670s. The relationship between him and

the Nitrowskis must have been very close indeed; in 1685 he married Georg Nitrowski's daughter Magdalena. The Brandtners decided to settle in Toruń, an important city which, like Gdańsk and Kraków, was located on the trade route marked by the Wisła river. Brandtner must quickly have understood the opportunities presented by Toruń's location to build and transport organs to the numerous churches of central Poland. His designs were clearly inspired by concepts developed within the Nitrowski family. In 1695 Matthäus the Elder baptised his son and gave him his forename, rendering Matthäus the Elder and Matthäus the Younger difficult to distinguish for the present-day researcher. The Brandtners obtained prominent commissions for churches in Toruń, for the cathedral in Włocławek and even for Sandomierz. Several organs and many organ cases made by, or attributed to, the Brandtners have survived to the present day.

When Matthäus Brandtner the Elder died in 1734, his workshop was taken over by his son, who himself probably died during the 1750s.

**The organs of Wąchock, Sulejów and Koniecpol**

The restoration of the Hummel/Nitrowski organ in Olkusz required the careful study of several existing 'reference' instruments. Among them were three anonymous organs built between 1640 and 1650 which bore great similarities to that in Olkusz as instruments from the direct circle of (or perhaps even by) Georg Nitrowski. The organs of Koniecpol (c.1641), Wąchock (c.1650) and Sulejów (c.1644) all feature the wind-chest type typically found in the organs of Hummel and Nitrowski, with wind dividers in the note channels for every stop. Likewise, the pipework and action parallel Olkusz, which in turn shares common tonal characteristics with the three aforementioned organs. Wąchock was crucial for the reconstruction of the Olkusz reed stops and mixture compositions, Koniecpol served, like Levoča, as a reference for the reconstruction of the embossed front pipe, Sulejów through its affinity with Wąchock provided further evidence of stylistic trends. All three organs have 8ft main manual divisions, 4ft Rückpositivs and pedal divisions based on open 16ft principal stops. Koniecpol has two free-standing pedal towers, like so many organs of the German north; Wąchock and Sulejów have their pedal departments located behind the main case and thus speaking less directly. Tonally these organs are characterised by having the same standard stops on every division: a great variety of foundations, salicionals and extremely wide-scaled chimney flutes. All three organs have survived in altered states. The best-preserved is the organ at Wąchock, which is completely original with the exception of the Rückpositiv III-rank mixture, some individual pipes in other stops, the bellows and the keyboards. All three organs are eminently restorable to their original state; a tantalising task for the future... ■

*Dr Krzysztof Urbaniak is professor of organ and head of the Institute of Harpsichord, Organ, Sacred Music and Early Instruments at the Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź, as well as a multi-award-winning organist. From 2013-16 he was an organ expert for the Polish Ministry of Culture.*

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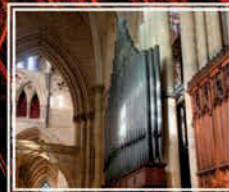
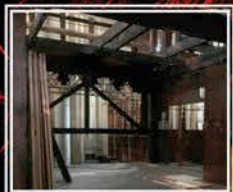
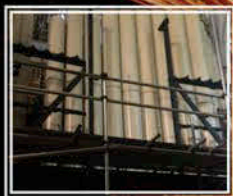
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# Whistle-blower

Raised in a home without music, Irish composer Gerald Barry finds inspiration in a host of unlikely sources, from the shipping forecast to Beethoven's most curious letters. **Stephen Pritchard** finds out more

FRANCES MARSHALL

No one would ever accuse Gerald Barry of being conventional. The composer of outlandish operas, large-scale orchestral works, chamber pieces and songs is renowned for his totally individual, distinctly angular, energetic and bubblingly joyous music. His wild imagination – and his demands on singers and players – seems to know no bounds, and yet this is a man who treasures tradition and the richness of his musical inheritance.

His operatic treatment of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* has a basso profundo sing Lady Bracknell, while the clash between Gwendolen and Cecily is accompanied by synchronised plate-smashing. Early works from 1979 include '\_\_\_\_\_' for ensemble, of which his teacher, the avant-garde composer Mauricio Kagel, wrote: 'Gerald Barry is always sober, but might as well always be drunk.' Also, from 1979 is *Ø* for two pianos, in which both pianos play identical music simultaneously. You get the picture.

His gloriously manic *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* was staged at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, earlier this year, but his choral work is rarely performed anywhere; and so it is with some anticipation that aficionados await the BBC Singers' programme of Barry's smaller-scale work at St Giles' Cripplegate, London, in early March. Prepare to be amazed.

Barry explains that his 1950s childhood in the west of Ireland was one devoid of music in the home. 'No piano, no record player, no TV – just the radio,' he said. But there was music at church, and hymns have remained important to him throughout his life. Hearing a Handel aria broadcast one day was 'a lightning flash' that set him on a course to be a composer. 'The church harmonium was the first keyboard I touched, at the age of 11. Then at the age of 18, I went to university and studied the organ, and Bach became part of my nervous system.'

▲ Irish composer Gerald Barry: 'I studied the organ, and Bach became part of my nervous system'

▷



◀ He was fascinated by the early music movement in the 1970s and studied harpsichord with John Beckett, founder of the pioneering Musica Reservata and cousin of the playwright Samuel Beckett. 'I did a vocal setting of lines from *Waiting for Godot* and Samuel Beckett was very kind and helpful. He was so gracious. I wrote to him in Paris and he sent me two replies in one day. He travelled out of Paris that day

the soloist should be willing to forgo professionalism to capture that sound,' he says.

There's quite a bit of jaunty whistling for the choir in *O Lord, how vain*, something that would certainly never have occurred to Byrd, but it has become a Barry trademark, adding an extra dimension to several of his choral works. It turns up again in *Long Time*, which sets the opening lines of Marcel Proust's

## 'Some of Schott's replies to Beethoven are incredibly like the emails I receive today!'

and had obviously forgotten he had written the first one that morning, as he sent another postcard from the countryside in the afternoon.'

There will be no Beckett settings in the St Giles' concert, but there will be his reimagining of Sir Philip Sidney's poem *O Lord, how vain*, words more familiarly set by William Byrd, a composer he greatly respects. And while Barry's piece is a million miles from Byrd, it retains something of the contours of the English renaissance and features an opening soprano solo of great beauty. 'I wanted to capture something of the innocence of a young boy treble singing alone. It should be sung without the knowingness of adulthood;

*Remembrance of Things Past*, beginning: 'For a long time I used to go to bed early.' The work unfolds over gently rising and falling C major scales, voice parts handing over to each other in strict rhythmic regularity.

Why did he choose this device? 'At first, I was completely flummoxed. If you presume to approach some of the most famous opening lines in literature, it's probably best to use the barest possible means to allow the text to be unencumbered, yet not to be bathetic or banal. I wanted something as pure as those famous lines.' The whistling is an evocation of the bells and chiming clocks he hears from his home in Dublin.

▼ The opening soprano solo of *O Lord, how vain*, to be sung 'without the knowingness of adulthood'. It is followed by whistling, which has become a Barry trademark

▲ In *The Coming of Winter*, Barry sets the text in an incantatory manner, in the style of the shipping forecast, so that it sounds like an urgent news or weather bulletin

O LORD, HOW VAIN / GERALD BARRY / REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION FROM SCHOTT MUSIC LTD

**O Lord, how vain**  
for SATB choir

Text: Sir Philip Sidney Gerald Barry

♩ = 116 Simply, with very little vibrato

Soprano solo *mp*

O Lord, how vain are all our frail de-lightes: How mix'd with sour the

6  
S. — sweet of our de-sire; How sub-ject oft to — For — tune's

11  
S. sub- the sleights: How soon con- — — — — — sum'd like snow a -

15  
S. gainst the fire. — Sith in this life our plea-sures all be —

20  
S. vain, O Lord, — O Lord, grant me that I may them dis-dain.

A ♩ = 104 Lustily (tutti) Whistle

25  
T. *p* *mf*

29  
T.

**The coming of winter**

Text: 9th or 10th century Irish Gerald Barry

♩ = 132 \*  
In one breath

Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass *mp*

I have news for you: the stag bells, win-ter pours sum-mer

\* Observe all metronome marks strictly.

4  
has gone. Wind high and cold, the sun low, its course is short; the sea runs

8  
high. Brac-ken is ve-ry red. Its shape is lost; the call of the wild

12  
goose has be-come u-sual; Cold has seized the birds' wings; sea-son of

16  
ice, this is my news.

THE COMING OF WINTER / GERALD BARRY / REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION FROM SCHOTT MUSIC LTD

'I love to hear them, particularly in the quiet of the night, when everything has a special quality.'

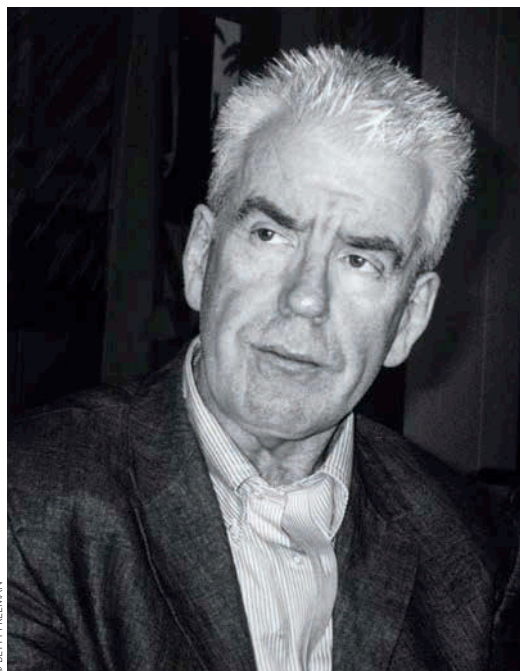
And when the bells have ceased, he says there is another magical element to the night: the shipping forecast on the radio. 'I love the way that factual information is conveyed in this haunting, incantatory language. It's so evocative.' He took this approach when writing *The Coming of Winter*, commissioned by the Cork International Choral Festival in 1997. The 9th-century Irish text reads like an urgent news or weather bulletin '...wind high and cold, the sun is low, its course is short, the sea runs high...' Chanting in unison, the choir races through the facts, formal and detached, bouncing between B and G on separate syllables in 6/8. It sounds simple, but it is extremely tricky to get right. And then Barry makes the choir sing the words backwards: 'They sound like Vikings!'

Taking his cue from Bach and Handel, Barry admits that he occasionally recycles material. His piece *Carol*, also included in the BBC Singers' concert, began life in his first opera, *The Intelligence Park*. At least he thinks so; it could have been created for his Handel-inspired opera *The Triumph of Beauty and Deceit*. 'I simply can't remember. You archive all these things in your head and they pop up at random. Anyway, *Carol* comes from my deep love of the Oxbridge college sound. I would give anything to have King's sing one of my pieces one day.'

Barry has always been fascinated by mystical events that cannot necessarily be explained away as mere coincidence. He gives as an example a day he spent taking a tram to the suburbs of Vienna to visit the house where Beethoven took rooms in the summer: 'I remember sitting in the courtyard thinking, "How on earth did he get his piano in here?" I returned to the city centre and went to the British Council library which had a three-volume set of Beethoven's letters. I took down one at random and it fell open at a letter from Beethoven to a furniture remover, discussing arrangements for moving his piano into that very house.'

Beethoven's letters inspired what promises to be the centrepiece of the concert, his 25-minute *Schott & Sons, Mainz*, almost a miniature opera for solo bass and choir. The text is taken entirely from the composer's letters to his publishers and charts his worries, arguments over fees and score corrections, his breakdown and his death. There is some twinkly-eyed mischief here, as Schott is also Barry's publisher: 'Some of their replies to Beethoven are incredibly like the emails I receive today!'

The soloist portrays the increasingly irascible Beethoven. 'It's a Boris Godonov of a part', says Barry, who will be interested to hear it sung by a choral bass, rather than an operatic one, as he feels this is more in keeping with Beethoven himself, who would sing around the house in the bass register. 'There's some desperate stuff in the letters, particularly when he



© BETTY FREEMAN

was on his death-bed. He wrote three times to Schott begging them to find him some Rhine wine which his doctor said would help his condition, but which was unavailable in Vienna. They never replied. Eventually when they did send the wine, it was too late: he was too ill to drink it and died soon after.'

The letters also reveal Beethoven the visionary technologist. 'Would it not be possible to invent a method of multiplying copies of one's works by oneself by stereotype, without being forced to employ this scourge of copyists?', he asks testily, and then later states: 'Let us thank God for the steam cannons that we are expecting and the steam shipping that we already possess.'

Barry says the correspondence sometimes displays a deceitful side to Beethoven, trying to sell the same piece to several publishers, and admits that the letters gave him opportunity 'for a little fun'. As a pupil of Karlheinz Stockhausen, he was amused at Beethoven railing against rumours spread about him by 'a certain Stockhausen, who is founding a singing club' and to find a mention of the Duke of Darmstadt. 'In my day, Darmstadt was the mecca for avant-garde composers, so for amusement I set this section to the sort of music you would be more likely to hear on a cruise ship.'

Plainly, this will be no ordinary concert. ■

*Singers at Six: Choral Music by Gerald Barry takes place at St Giles' Cripplegate, London, at 6pm on Wednesday 4 March.*

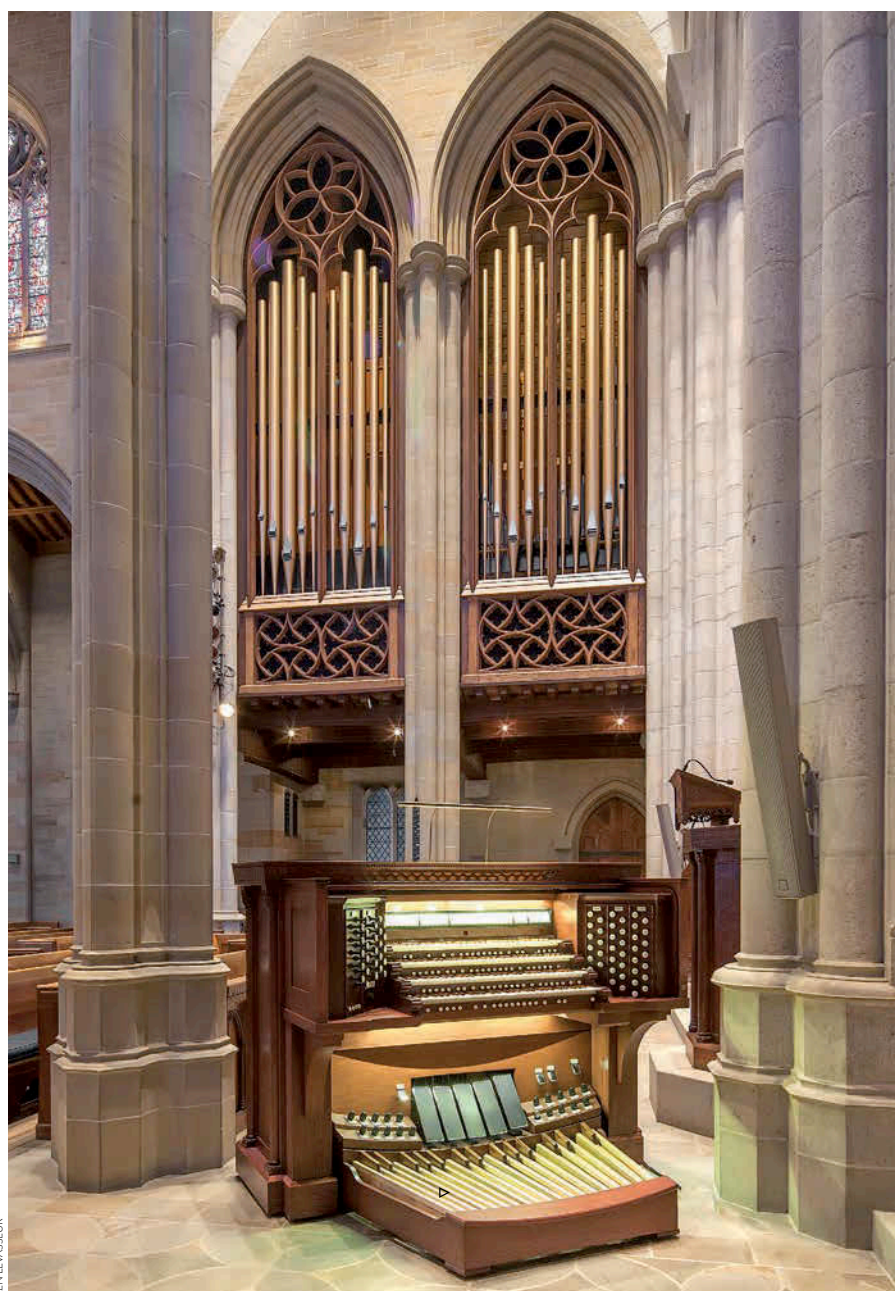
*Stephen Pritchard writes on music for the Observer and the classical music website Bachtrack. He trained at Portsmouth Cathedral and sings with the English Chamber Choir.*



# Schools of thought

We may live in a throw-away age, but North American organ builders and churches are setting a fine example in recycling instruments, writes **Jonathan Ambrosino**

## part 4 Relocations



A silent organ in a redundant church is hardly a preservationist's dreamscape. Thus the happily relocated instrument offers a special kind of hope, since old organs transplanted into new situations often join clear goals to a known quantity. Even then, the second lives of pipe organs are capable of surprise and novelty.

There is nothing novel about relocating organs. Stretching barely so far back as the 19th century, we have the exhibition organs that found homes: the 1847 Father Willis to Winchester, or the 1885 Michell & Thynne 'Model' organ, now the famous 'Grove' at

**Today, redundant organs are relocated more from desire for a particular organ than from economy**

Tewkesbury Abbey. There are the house organs that ended up in churches: famously in France, those of Baron L'Espée (now Sacré-Cœur and Saint-Antoine-des-Quinze-Vingts, Paris); in England, Lord Glentanar's 1927 Harrison & Harrison, moved in 1954 to the Temple Church, London; the 1881 Odell originally for a home in New York, moved in 1890 to the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall, near Albany. And then there are the hundreds of organs displaced by fashion, favour or closure, finding second homes.

In the US, the period 1960-2000 saw a

◀ Charles Kegg paired two Skinner organs, with some new material, to create this instrument for Bryn Athyn Cathedral, near Philadelphia

great many relocations, mostly of smaller 19th-century trackers. To a real extent, the Organ Historical Society was established in 1956 to promote awareness and salvation of precisely these instruments. OHS Conventions routinely feature such organs, one or more invariably being relocations. A considerable proportion of this migratory activity occurred at the behest of the late Alan Laufman, kingpin of such activities and founder-executive director of the Organ Clearing House. Laufman was not exactly a preservationist; he simply cared about these organs' basic survival. Along the way these instruments often received changes of a modernising sort – dulcianas or Gambas becoming mutations, 12- or 25-note pedal compasses being expanded, perhaps a tenor c Swell gaining a bass section. Economy was a happy by-product, as it was almost always cheaper to relocate than buy new.

In today's climate, redundant organs are being relocated with equal fervour but with a seeming shift in intent – more from desire for a particular organ, less from 'making-do' economy. And with the revival of interest in 20th-century organs of all periods, formerly overlooked instruments are now prized, saved, and relocated. While one might

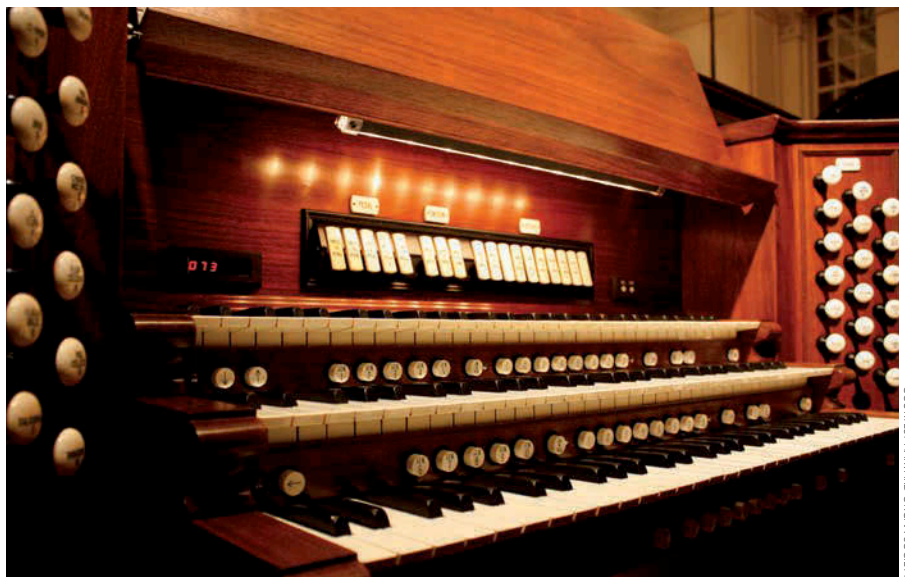
suppose those to be high-romantic organs (and many are), first-generation tracker-action revival organs are also finding new admiration.

Monumental Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia illustrates this evolution. Built in 1814, it first imported an 1817 Bevington before getting a New York-built Henry Erben three-manual in 1850. When a 25-rank Skinner (Opus 574) replaced the Erben in 1926, the Erben went to Mount Olivet Baptist, also in Richmond. Meanwhile, Monumental's Skinner was made homeless when the church closed in 1975. Ironically,

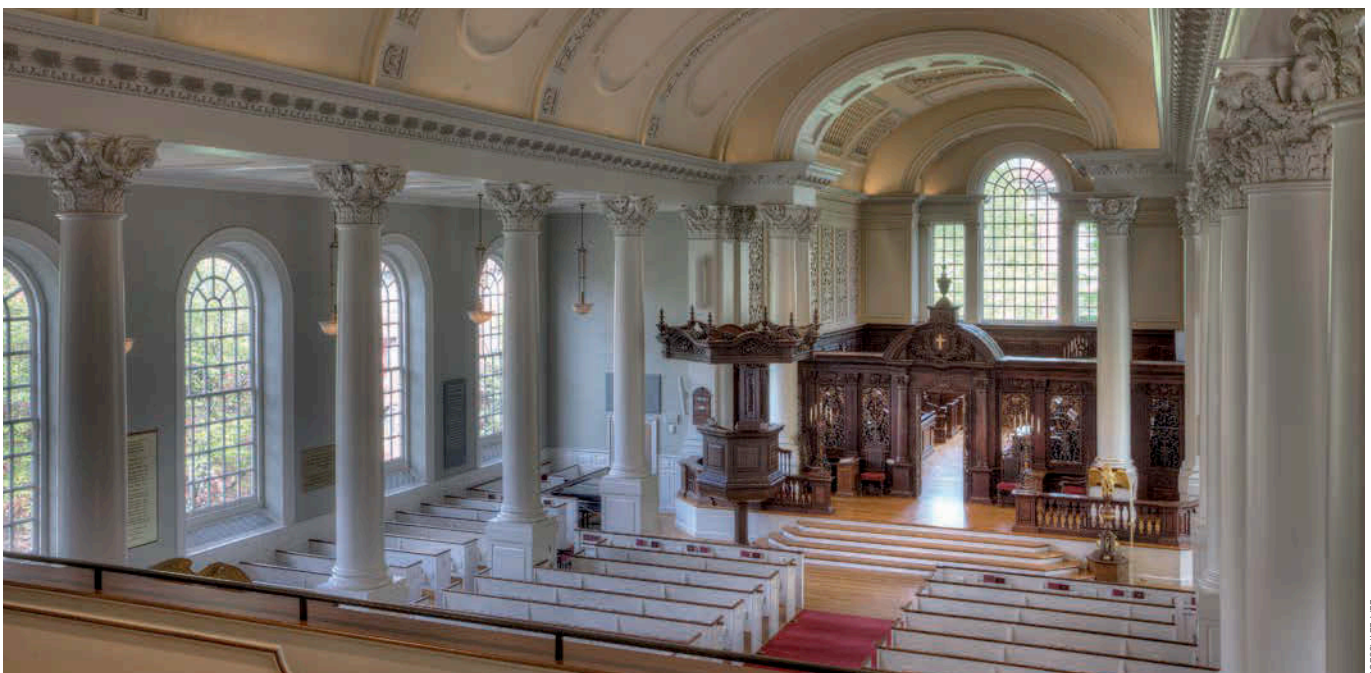
in that same year, the Erben moved again, to Trinity Methodist Church in McLean, Virginia. Its 1850 case was re-combined with the organ at McLean, while the Skinner was placed at St Bridget's Catholic Church in the same town. Six years ago, the Skinner was made redundant in favour of a new Buzard (featured here in March/April 2016).

Opus 574's next phase particularly typifies our current moment. At the Ohio shop of Charles Kegg, the Richmond Skinner was paired with a two-manual 1928 Skinner (Opus 682) from Danville, Virginia to form, with some new material, a new/old 46-rank ➤

► In 2011, Skinner's Opus 793 (1930) was relocated to Appleton Chapel (chancel section, behind grilles) of the Memorial Church at Harvard University (below)



COURTESY HARVARD ORGAN SOCIETY



LENI LEVASSOUR



## NORTH AMERICAN ORGAN BUILDING: 4

◀ four-manual for Bryn Athyn Cathedral (Swedenborg Church) in Pennsylvania. This project, funded by Philadelphia's angel-philanthropist Fred Haas, typifies a strand of early 20th-century organ veneration particularly intense in the Philadelphia area.

Kegg's amalgamation coalesces well into something evocative of the period without being strictly Skinnerian, particularly in the newer reeds. And, in its treating original material as ingredients to be melded rather than the restoration of a single instrument, the project stands out, since most other relocations of 20th-century electro-pneumatic instruments have been restored either as is or with minor change, with

preservation a central tenet. Foley-Baker, Inc., of Tolland, Connecticut, has done several such projects, in line with electro-pneumatic renovation work for which the firm is renowned. The company's earliest such relocation was a three-manual 1930 Skinner from Reading, Pennsylvania, moved by FBI to St Mark's Episcopal in Glendale, California, in 2009. No tonal changes were made; the organ was entirely reconditioned and re-configured for its new home, its console modernised. Enjoying beautiful acoustics, Opus 774 sounds faithfully typical in its new home.

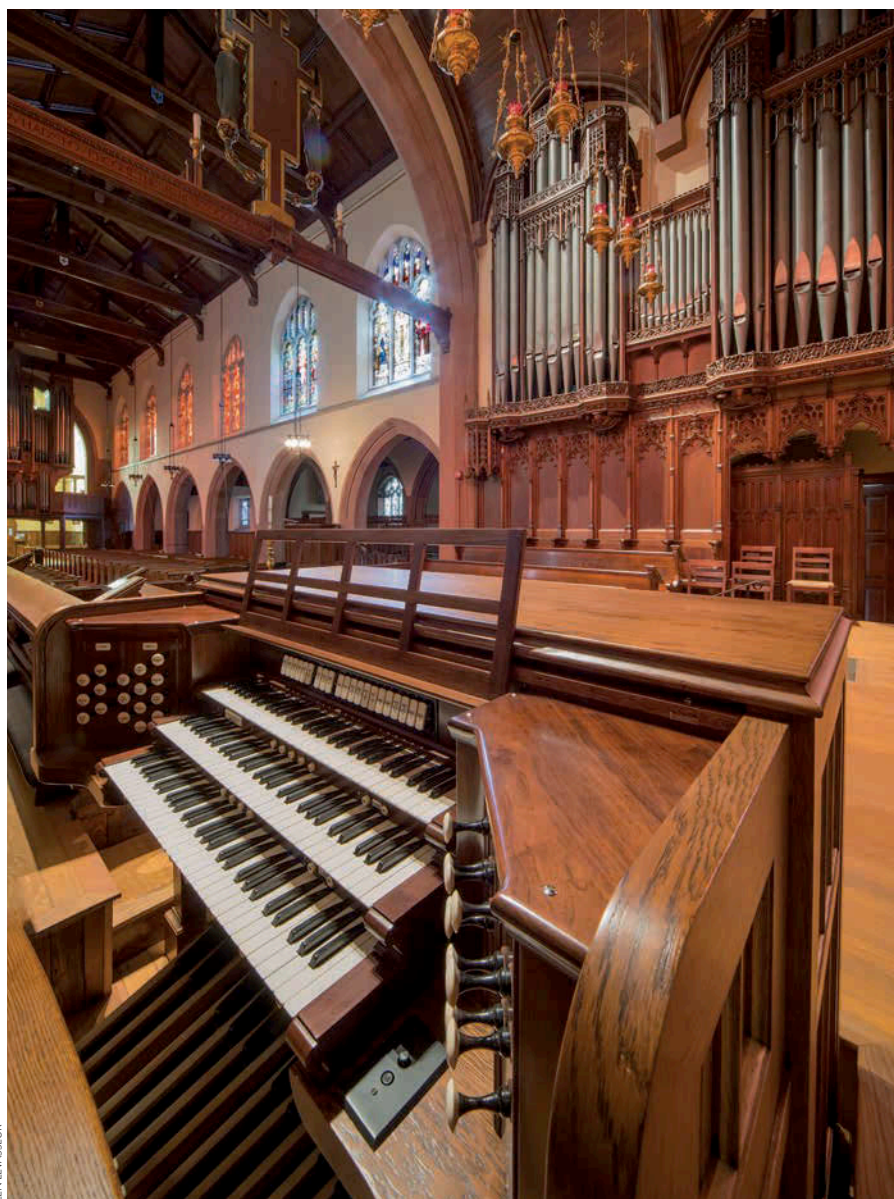
Foley-Baker was also responsible for the beautiful relocation, completed in 2011, of the 45-rank Skinner (Opus 793, 1930), into

Appleton Chapel of Harvard University. Originally in the ceiling of Second Church of Christ, Scientist, in Hartford, Connecticut, this Skinner was renovated and re-engineered for its new home. The renovation of a 1933 Aeolian-Skinner console for this project was entrusted to Richard Houghten and J. Zamberlan & Co., who have done similar high-end work at Duke University and Trinity Church, Boston. For its new home, the organ gained a Swell 16 Bourdon and a Pedal 32 Bourdon extension. Remote and refined in Hartford, Opus 793 is more forthcoming in Cambridge, as least as heard in the confines of Appleton Chapel, 100 seats in collegiate form connected to the larger Memorial Church, which is ably served by a new Fisk (Opus 103, 2012).

Foley-Baker is currently engaged in its third such project, another 1930 Skinner (Opus 819) originally installed in a San Francisco church and moved in 1938 to Thorne Hall, at Occidental College in suburban Los Angeles. In its 1930 installation, the organ stood high and divided in an open gallery, with a speaking Great 16ft in the façade. At Occidental, the organ was secreted into chambers at the back of an auditorium, the console far forward on the stage. Now, the organ is headed for a space as yet undetermined, but hopefully its best: the Episcopal High School in suburban Houston, where Garmon Ashby handles chapel music. Another recent, notable Skinner relocation is at the Parish of All Saints, Ashmont (Boston, Opus 708, 1929, 24 ranks), as a chancel instrument to accompany the choir of men and boys. Like Harvard, the little Skinner is paired to a gallery Fisk, providing great variety within the same walls. This work was undertaken by Jonathan Orloff, Joe Sloane and myself, completed in 2015.

Aeolian-Skinner organs have not been immune. Spencer Organ Company and Bruce Case recently relocated a modest two-manual of 1952 from a church in Kenosha, Wisconsin, to a Catholic diocesan centre in Madison, Wisconsin, where it is used regularly in service and recital. The A. Thompson-Allen Company, famous curators at Yale University, are currently removing a 1951 three-manual from Church of the Redeemer, New Haven, headed for Derry Presbyterian Church in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

▼ Skinner's Opus 708, now the chancel instrument at All Saints, Ashmont, in Boston



LEN LEWASSEUR

For some relocations, the adopted home is simply happier than the original. The 1989 Noack formerly at Church of the Redeemer, Chestnut Hill (Boston), never seemed settled in its first home, with a blazing Great in the open coupled to a chambered Swell, the Choir a petite continuo directly behind the ground-level detached, reversed console. The result never rose to the level of the concept. Now at Saint Paul's Chapel in New York City, Noack Opus 161 is reborn with new cohesion and appeal, in a gorgeously expanded 1802 case. (New and far finer Swell reeds and Pedal Trombone do not hurt.) A similar sort of transplant, though incomplete and more slow-going, involves the four-manual French-classic-themed 1978 Casavant installed at Trinity Church, Princeton, New Jersey, during the time of James Litton. Here was an organ crying out for a better situation, as Trinity Princeton is a tough acoustical sell for any instrument. Purchased by electrical engineer Arpad Muryani, and installed in the former St Patrick's RC Church, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin (now re-christened Fond du Lac Learning Center), the Casavant is being reworked by Wahl Organbuilders, with especially stylish new console appurtenances. Great and Positive are up and running, and in these buoyant, cheerful acoustics the organ sounds grand, natural and free in a way that was never the case in its first home.

Perhaps the most gratifying thing about such situations is to see the formerly silent now routinely heard. In both Glendale and Ashmont, these are not fancy large organs, but basic-issue instruments – the 1930 counterparts to the 1870s stock-model trackers – rescued from closed churches, put into top shape, and now used weekly. The Harvard Skinner is used daily in term-time, as is the New York Noack (unsurprising, as few US churches make as much music as Trinity Wall Street). And the New York situation says something else. That an institution capable of affording truly anything chose instead to relocate something existing speaks to the stature of older organs in modern awareness. ■

*Jonathan Ambrosino is a Boston-based tuner-technician, who works nationally as a consultant and tonal finisher. He has written for Choir & Organ since 1998.*



# Freestyle BY GRAEME KAY

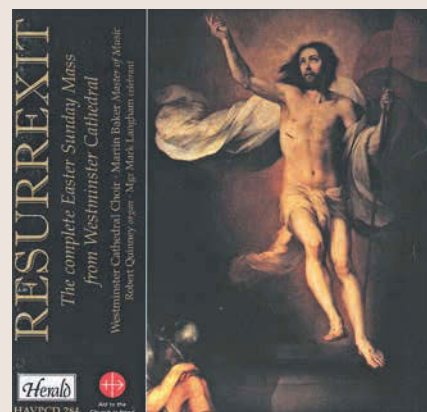
**Martin Baker's Drome legacy, a Bach lacuna filled, and a *mot-du-jour***

Martin Baker's lamentable departure from Westminster Cathedral prompted me to revisit one of my favourites among his many recordings. Martin followed his predecessor James O'Donnell in building on the Cathedral's magnificent series of choir recordings on Hyperion, adding choral works by Brahms, Rheinberger, James MacMillan, Judith Bingham, Peter Maxwell Davies and Vaughan Williams to a catalogue already bursting with renaissance polyphony, to which he added even more captivating repertoire. But I regularly turn to *Resurrexit – the Complete Easter Sunday Mass* [Herald HAVPCD 264] for a thrilling example of a recorded act of worship. Actually recorded 'cold' in July 2002, the rite begins with Martin improvising an Introit on plainsong which is full of charged expectancy and urgent forward momentum, the altar bell midway through signalling the beginning of the Mass. The Gloria and Agnus Dei are from Dvořák's Mass in D; accompanied chant shows off that most rewarding of the organist's skills; a sequence on 'Victimae paschali laudes' has fine improvised interpolations by the Cathedral's then organ scholar, Robert Houssart; Martin is back with more improvisations between verses of the Te Deum, before Robert Quinney, then Martin's assistant, finishes the service with Durufle's Choral-Improvisation on 'Victimae paschali'. The Willis organ is predictably magnificent throughout. You can almost smell the incense; but what the recording epitomises is brilliant musical direction, capturing an assembly of talents in a moment of time, embracing the congregation of listeners and accompanying them on a pathway to the numinous. Such talent should never be taken for granted, or squandered.

A newspaper report brings the intriguing revelation from the Bach Archive in Leipzig that, far from there being a lacuna in the performance and appreciation of Bach's music between his death in 1750 and Mendelssohn's revival of the *St Matthew Passion* in 1829, it was not in fact forgotten or dismissed as old-fashioned. The evidence comes from some part-books for the final chorus of the *St Matthew* dating from 1770, the work of a Berlin copyist called Holstein, which were bought at a Sotheby's auction last year. Archive director Prof. Peter Wollny told the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that Holstein's customer was the Music-Practising Society, a group of wealthy Berliners who met once a week to do what it says in their name. Wollny suspects that this club kept the memory of the oratorio alive until it found its way into Mendelssohn's hands as a Christmas present from his grandmother, Bella Salomon. 'It is absolutely conceivable that Bella knew of the piece from this earlier concert, that she witnessed a performance as a girl or a young woman.'

The automated voice on my new local trains sounds agreeably Radio 3- or Radio 4-ish. A lovely modulated mezzo, a bit like Charlotte Green. The Radio 3 vibe was compounded when we were advised, in cold and slippery weather, to take care 'when alighting'. If the term gave off a whiff of those not-so-old Radio 3 drivetime programme titles *Aubade* and *Homeward Bound*, unfortunately the modern synonyms for 'alighting' which I came up with were definite no-nos: 'stepping down' (too royal, and/or too indicative of possible wrong-doing) and 'getting off' (er...). So the train company is right to stick with 'alight'. A lovely word. Does what it says on the tin. ■

*Graeme Kay is a digital platforms producer for BBC Radio 3 and 4.*





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Joshua Pacey

## Now the day is over

Text: Sabine Baring-Gould, after Proverbs 3:24

For C&O's second New Music commission with Clare College, Cambridge, Joshua Pacey has written a gentle work for unaccompanied SATB choir; he talks to **Shirley Ratcliffe**



HANNAH KING

▲ Joshua Pacey: 'In composition, I feel I can truly express my musicality fully'

Joshua Pacey thinks of himself as a British-American composer. 'My mother was born in Ohio, my father in England, and I was born in Birmingham. I've always felt myself to be British in identity and as a composer, but I remember distinctly the impact the "American" style of composers such as Copland and Ives had on me early in my musical development,' he explains. 'Playing their music in school orchestras, particularly Copland's *Billy the Kid* and

*Appalachian Spring*: those open harmonies and sweeping melodic gestures have filtered down into my own music over the years.'

Aged seven, Pacey became a chorister at Winchester Cathedral, and there developed an appreciation for choral music and its composition. After Winchester, he continued his music studies at Charterhouse School: 'I received invaluable teaching on the fundamental basics of composition, from Bach chorale harmonisation to composing

in the style of German romantics, as well as a thorough covering of music history. This gave me a solid grounding in the technique of writing music. I was lucky enough to write for our fantastic choir, which gave me opportunities to try out new ideas.'

Was it inevitable that he would become a composer? 'I think so, yes! My musical life began as a singer. I still sing, and will do so for the rest of my life; but it is in composition that I feel I can truly express my musicality fully. Singing influences my work and vice versa, and I hope these two aspects of my life never stop intertwining and cross-pollinating, as they are integral to my development. Singing in choirs (and the musical education you receive as a chorister) gives you an incredibly detailed understanding of the inner workings of composition: the importance of voice leading, chord spacing, how parts interact, registration, dynamics, timbre – these are all laid bare in choral music.'

Clare College, Cambridge was the next step on his musical journey: 'It was an incredible place, and the education I received there was second to none. I was able to perform around the world as a member of the College Choir, write music for it; and it was where my love of film music grew. My tutors always pushed me to explore further in my composition and other studies, which was key in allowing me to find my own voice in my writing.'

Pacey's passion for composing film music began early, listening to the scores of John Barry and Erich Korngold. After graduating from Cambridge, he went on to study for a Master's in Composition for the Screen at the Royal College of Music and was made the John Barry scholar. 'I remember as a child going to a BBC Prom and hearing

the Korngold Violin Concerto played, and being astonished by sounds which I had never heard before. It was my first exposure to that kind of harmony and expressivity of melody; it must have stuck with me. My more recent exploration of Korngold's film scores has confirmed to me what a master of both harmony and melody he is. John Barry's music is the apotheosis of melody in film scoring. You can't hear the tunes from *Dances with Wolves* or *Out of Africa* and not know who wrote them. He has such a skill in crafting compelling structure in his melodies, always drawing the ear forward. I think these two composers had a huge influence on my composition, which was nurtured further at the RCM. The composer whose music made me decide to become a film composer is Thomas Newman. His scores from the 1990s to today are truly new and forward-thinking. His use of non-western instrumentation gives his scores their own sound, and again his combination of harmony and melody is wonderfully satisfying.'

## 'Beauty in music is incredibly important, but this has to be tempered with dissonance and conflict'

Away from the world of film music, Pacey discusses his choral writing. 'It is influenced by the Anglican choral tradition, and, for me, Herbert Howells encapsulates this. His music is at once practical and, more importantly, enjoyable to sing, achingly beautiful and capable of huge emotional power. His *Take him, earth, for cherishing* is a particular favourite of mine.'

How did he approach his C&O commission for the Choir of Clare College? 'Director of music Graham Ross suggested I compose a piece to words by someone with a Clare connection. Sabine Baring-Gould studied at Clare College and I remembered from my time there having sung words by him. On looking through his many works, I came across *Now the day is over*, itself written after Proverbs 3:24, which struck me with its beautiful simplicity. I have used a section from the poem, as it immediately inspired me to set it to music. It is a prayer to God to grant rest to the weary at the close of the day, and an invocation of sleep. I felt the semi-strophic structure and gently undulating harmony

that the text required lent themselves only to unaccompanied choir. It's the medium in which I feel most able to express my emotional reaction to the text: there is no barrier between the listener and the words – both music and words intermingle in the piece.'

Once the text was chosen, Pacey found the music came very quickly. 'I sat at the piano and the words dictated how the music was formed. I find the editing process afterwards takes longer than the writing itself, as you have to be willing to make changes to improve it. I am aiming to give the piece a gentle, soporific feeling while maintaining a prayer-like quality. Beauty in music is incredibly important, but this has to be tempered with dissonance and conflict, which serve to heighten the effectiveness of the eventual resolution. I always try to strike this balance in my compositions.'

As a composer of library music for Universal Production Music, Pacey writes music that can be used in a variety of

situations and in various different media: 'An album I write will have a certain theme. A recent project was called *Expansive Documentary* with the music aimed towards use in nature documentaries. Any filmmaker can license the tracks for use in their work, so the pieces have to have a very clearly defined structure, so they can be cut up and rearranged to suit particular films. It's something I find rewarding and I enjoy the variation in the styles I have to write in.'

An important commission for him has been the advertising campaign for SABIC, a company bent on solving tomorrow's challenges ethically: 'It taught me a lot about the industry of writing music for the screen, where compositional expression must often be superseded by other factors and functions.'

This busy composer is currently working on a feature film due out in 2020 and has recently completed a setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. 'I intend to write arrangements and original pieces for as long as I am able!' ■

[joshuapacey.com](http://joshuapacey.com)

**Now the day is over**  
Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)  
Choir College, Cambridge (1872-80)

Joshua Pacey (b. 1995)  
Clare College, Cambridge 2015-16

Gently ♩ = 68

SOPRANO  
ALTO  
TENOR  
BASS

Now the day is over. Night is draw-ing nigh. Sha-dows of the eve-ning. Steal a-cross the sky. Je-sus, give the wea-ry

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# FESTIVALS 2020

Guide to what's on



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MALTA INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL / JAVIERMAN





**LEEDS INTERNATIONAL ORGAN FESTIVAL**

**MONDAY LUNCHTIME RECITALS (LEEDS CATHEDRAL, 1.10 - 2.00 PM)**

11/05 Jonathan Rennert  
 18/05 Rachel Mahon  
 01/06 Friedhelm Flamme  
 08/06 Angela Metzger  
 15/06 David Pipe  
 22/06 Royal Academy of Music accordion students  
 29/06 Thomas Leech  
 06/07 Sean Montgomery  
 13/07 Alessandro Bianchi

**OTHER 2020 FESTIVAL EVENTS INCLUDE:**

09/06 Judith Weir CBE in conversation with Richard Mantle OBE  
 15/07 Beethoven 250th Anniversary Concert with Thomas Heywood

More information on all festival events including Evening Concerts and Masterclasses can be found at:  
[leedsiof.org](http://leedsiof.org) [facebook.com/LeedsIOF](https://www.facebook.com/LeedsIOF) [@LeedsIOF](https://twitter.com/LeedsIOF)




THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS

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 RCO diploma study and repertoire development strands.  
 Teachers include Andrew Arthur, Margaret Phillips, and Martin Schmeding.  
 15-17 April - Oxford

**Scandinavia Study Trip**  
 Teachers: Bine Bryndorf and Richard Brasier.  
 Venues include: Copenhagen Cathedral and Frederiksborg Castle.  
 17-21 May - Denmark and Sweden

**The Organ Student Experience**  
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 Comprehensive tuition for ambitious teenage organists of grade 7 standard and above.  
*see website for dates* - Cambridge

**Summer Course**  
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 3-8 August - London

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# Live wires

Flashing lights, smoke machines, pounding music ... and Handel. **Harriet Clifford** talks to Gregory Batsleer and Claire M. Singer about two innovative festivals, which combine classical music and electronics to dazzling effect

**T**echnology can be divisive, particularly when it comes to classical music. Why tamper with something so beautiful, when the music already speaks for itself? Many people want to hear a piece or an instrument played exactly how the composer would have heard it, without any special effects or electronics. Yet, is there also a place for experimentation and exploration? After all, composers throughout history have always been at the forefront of technological advancement, utilising all available techniques and developments to the best of their abilities. This month (March), two festivals which embrace technology are presented in London, celebrating classical music of the highest calibre in two different ways: through reimagining the works of

one of the world's most famous baroque composers, and through commissioning new experimental music.

On 27 March, Gregory Batsleer will conduct his Festival Voices choir and Ensemble FV orchestra in an evening event as part of the London Handel Festival. Entitled *Handel Remixed: Volume II*, it follows last year's debut appearance, returning to Peckham's Bussey Building to showcase some of Handel's best-known works, such as *Zadok the Priest* and *The King shall rejoice*. The difference, however, is that the music performed by the 12 singers and 12 instrumentalists will be remixed live in the nightclub by producer/DJ Nico Bentley. Batsleer professes himself to be 'very interested in how classical music can expand

its reach, find new audiences and begin to engage with 21st-century thinking.' Working in collaboration with Bentley over the last few years, Batsleer has begun to reimagine music from the baroque canon with electronic dance music: 'Baroque repertoire really suited having these new sounds mixed with them, because obviously baroque music is very much based on dance rhythm, as is music heard in clubs, so the two work hand-in-hand.'

London Handel Festival director Samir Savant shares Batsleer's vision and wants to broaden the horizons of the festival, this year running from 5 March to 10 April: the idea of an evening of Handel in a nightclub was born. 'Interestingly,' says Batsleer, 'this is the way Handel's music would have been presented ▶

▼ 'Baroque music is very much based on dance rhythm, as is music heard in clubs': *Handel Remixed: Volume II* comes to a nightclub in Peckham



LONDON HANDEL FESTIVAL





▲ Claire M. Singer (l) curates *Organ Reframed*, while Gregory Batsleer (r) conducts choir and orchestra to bring Handel to a wider audience

◀ when it was written. This sort of music wasn't necessarily for big grandiose concert halls – it was written for social gatherings and an evening's entertainment, and that's what we're trying to do with this project.'

How does it work? 'We've got a setlist of well-known Handel choruses – it's an eclectic mix of Handel, not just a specific piece. Nico, myself and the team work together to think about how we can reimagine these works, how we can look at them in a different

that – it can create the most exciting and eccentric energy and vivacious spirit in each performance.' Being held in a nightclub, one may imagine that the event would largely appeal to younger generations and those who may not be used to classical music concerts; yet Batsleer explains, 'We did a version of this last year and the audience demographic was completely mixed, ranging from people who had never been to a concert before to traditional Handel-goers. I think by and

try it out, and if they don't like it, in some ways that's great – as long as they're engaging with it.'

## 'On my first session with the organ, I was absolutely blown away by the unimaginable breadth of the instrument' – Claire M. Singer

way and create a base in which, in the performance, he remixes it live with the choir and the players.' Unlike a normal classical music concert, Batsleer and the players work with a click track: 'There's an element of rigidity that maybe other performances don't have, but actually the nature of baroque music requires a steady tactus, which doesn't really have much flexibility to it, so it forces the musicians to be strict to their tempi and commit to things.'

As with any live performance, there is a risk that something could go wrong, even more so in this case, as there are more elements at play. 'Sometimes a live performance needs

large everyone had a very unique experience. Bringing together audiences – young and old, new and established – that's what Samir's trying to achieve with this project.'

In reimagining Handel's work in this way, Batsleer says, 'I think it's important as artists that we are not afraid of people challenging us on this sort of thing. We're very keen that the music we play as musicians and singers is at a high level with the correct phrasing and the correct baroque articulation – it's not that we're going against the rule book. It's really just an exploration. If one caveats it like that, then I think it's hard to argue, because music is there for interpretation and exploration. People can

**N**orth of the river, Union Chapel hosts something a little different: *Organ Reframed*, an experimental organ festival which began in 2016 and is curated by Claire M. Singer. The festival, which this year runs from 27-28 March, evolved from The Organ Project, headed by Singer and transitioning Union Chapel's organ from its full restoration into a programme of concerts and educational workshops. The idea for the festival was sparked in 2006 when Singer was commissioned to write her first organ work for the SOUND Festival in Scotland: 'At that time, I was studying music at Goldsmiths College and writing quite abstract experimental works. On my first session with the organ, I was absolutely blown away by the unimaginable breadth of the instrument. I felt like I had discovered a secret and couldn't believe there weren't more organ works being written by contemporary or experimental composers. The organ to me was clearly an instrument invaluable to the future development of composition and performance.'

Like Handel's music, the organ has a rich tradition, which is something Singer acknowledges: 'The organ has one of the largest repertoires and, in my opinion,

we should embrace its historic repertoire and also help it to grow and keep the instrument moving forward. There aren't many contemporary composers writing for the organ, as access can be tricky – in order really to explore and write innovative music, you need time with the instrument.' *Organ Reframed* was developed with this in mind, aiming to commission artists to write new works, allowing them time on the instrument to develop ideas. 'To have the opportunity to build on the organ's rich history and bring it to the attention of a new generation of artists feels hugely important.'

How would Singer define 'experimental' music? 'For me, anyone writing experimental music is pushing existing boundaries and the current genres of that instrument. It's about finding the unique sounds of the instrument and exposing that beauty. I experiment a lot with mechanical stop action, controlling how much wind enters the pipe, which creates the most beautiful kaleidoscope of sound.' Like *Handel Remixed*, *Organ Reframed* attracts a varied demographic, ranging from regular organ recital-goers to people who have never heard the instrument before: 'Undeniably, the use of electronics does tend to pull in

a younger audience, but it is certainly not limited to this demographic.'

Often referred to as the 'Rolls Royce of organs', the 1877 'Father' Willis organ in Union Chapel was deliberately hidden behind ornate screens so as not to distract the congregation. Since then, Harrison & Harrison have carried out a restoration project and the hydraulic blowing system has been restored by Duplex, enabling it to be used as an alternative to the electric blowers. For the festival, Singer is writing an immersive work with Chris Watson, who is known for his recordings of wildlife and his ongoing work with Sir David Attenborough. 'We are creating a journey from pole to pole, which combines organ, field recordings, modular synths, the London Contemporary Orchestra (LCO) and Choir. Chris will be diffusing his field recordings live through a multi-channel system, and I will be at the organ with the LCO and Choir scattered around the chapel, to create a truly immersive aural journey.' Other performers at the festival include James McVinnie, Katherine Tinker and Jacob Lekkerkerker. Alongside the headline performances, the festival will also feature artist talks,

composition masterclasses and free, family-friendly organ building workshops.

Summing up *Organ Reframed*, Singer says, 'The festival is geared towards a pure listening experience. There will be no screens showing the organist at work; the chapel will be transformed into an immersive space to sit back and listen deeply to these new explorations of this wonderful instrument.'

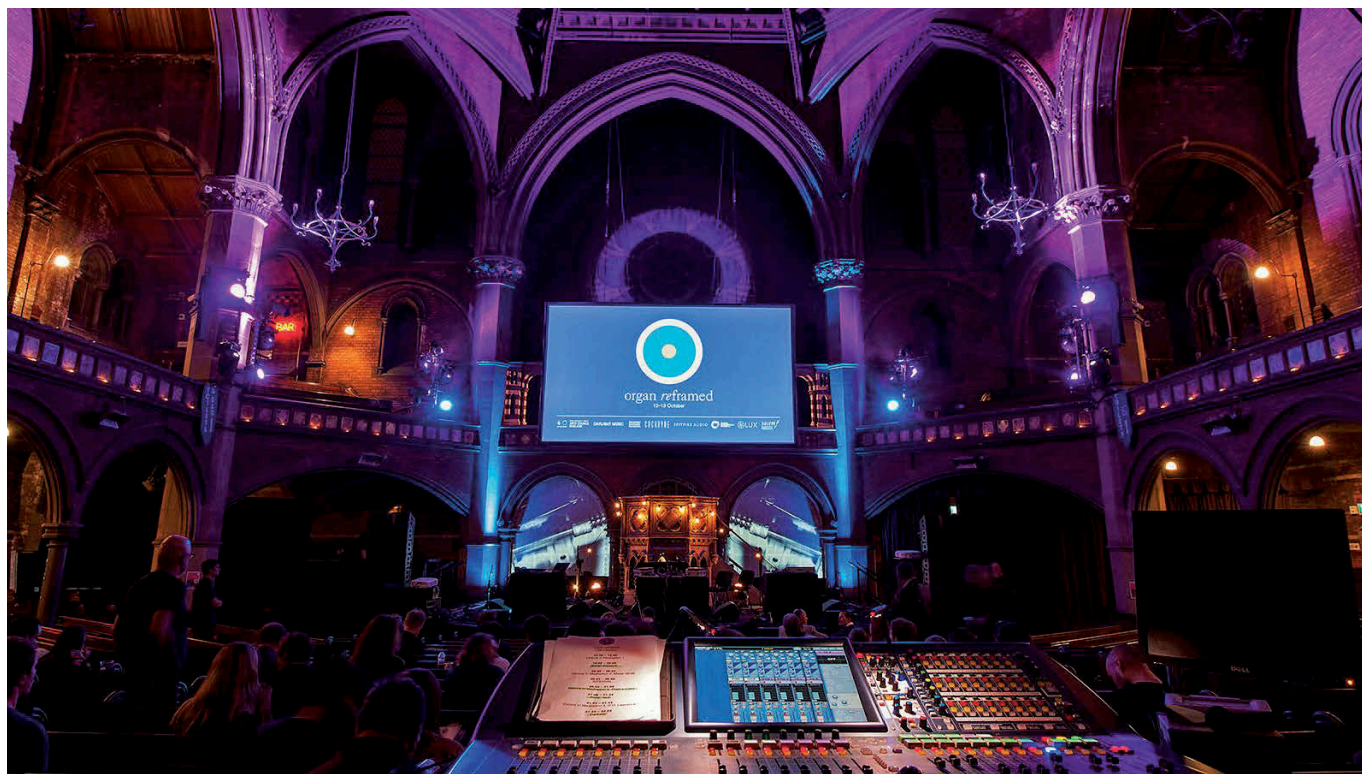
The thing that both these festivals have in common is curiosity; the people behind their conception are not content with solely presenting traditional repertoire and playing it in the way it has always been played. It goes without saying that there is a time and a place for tradition, but if no one ever pushed compositional and performative boundaries, then classical music would still be stuck firmly in the medieval period. What would Handel say to *Zadok the Priest* being performed in a nightclub in south London? The word 'chuffed' comes to mind. ■

*Handel Remixed: Volume II* – 7.30pm, 27 March, CLF Art Café, Bussey Building, Peckham, London.

Tickets: [london-handel-festival.com](http://london-handel-festival.com).

*Organ Reframed* – 27-28 March, Union Chapel, London. Tickets: [unionchapel.org.uk](http://unionchapel.org.uk).

▼ 'Anyone writing experimental music is pushing existing boundaries and the current genres of that instrument': *Organ Reframed* celebrates innovative composition



COURTESY ORGAN REFRAMED





# St Davids Cathedral Festival

## Gŵyl Eglwys Gadeiriol Tyddewi

### Friday 22 – Sunday 31 May 2020

**Festival Launch with Oliver Tarney**  
Ar Log

**Dame Evelyn Glennie with Trio HLK**

**The British Sinfonietta & Stephen Richardson**

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**Olivier Latry Organist of Notre Dame Cathedral**

**VOCES8 with Rachel Podger (violin) "Guardian Angel"**

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**Florilegium**

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festival@stdavidscathedral.org.uk  
01437 722002 / 07506 117901  
stdavidscathedralfestival.co.uk

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# NORWEGIAN ORGAN FESTIVAL

## Sept 17th–20th 2020

### Stavanger & Sandnes

**Michel Bouvard //**  
**Organetto concert**  
**by Friman-Ambrocini-**  
**Vicens trio //** **Premiere**  
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# FESTIVALS 2020

## MARCH

### Malta International Choir Festival - Celebration of Lives

5-8 Mar, Malta

**Contact** +356 2291 5549,  
events@visitmalta.com  
maltachoirfest.com

### Pacific Baroque Festival

5-8 Mar, Victoria, Canada

**Contact** +1 250 590 0523,  
pacbaroque@earlymusic.bc.ca  
pacbaroque.com

### London Handel Festival

5 Mar-10 Apr, London, UK

**Contact** administrator@  
londonhandelfestival.org.uk  
london-handel-festival.com

### Oslo International Church Music Festival

13-22 Mar, Oslo, Norway

**Contact** +47 22 41 81 15,  
info@kirkemusikkfestivalen.no  
oicmf.no

### Fiestalonia Golden Voices of Montserrat 2020

22-26 Mar, Lloret de mar, Spain

**Contact** +34 688 276 248,  
info@fiestalonia.net  
fiestalonia.net

### Young2020Bohemia Prague

26-29 Mar, Prague, Czech Republic

**Contact** +420 222 560 502,  
info@eventsbohemia.cz  
eventsbohemia.cz

### Organ Reframed

27-28 Mar, Union Chapel, London, UK

**Contact** +44 20 7226 1686,  
events@unionchapel.org.uk  
unionchapel.org.uk

## APRIL

### 31st International Choir Festival and Competition Verona

1-5 Apr, Verona, Italy

**Contact** +49 228 28986011,  
info@musicultur.com

### Passiontide at Merton

3-5 Apr, Oxford, UK

**Box office** +44 1865 305305  
mertoncollegechoir.com

### Holy Week Festival

5-12 Apr, St John's Smith Square, London, UK

**Box office** +44 20 7222 1061, or in person at St John's Smith Square  
sjss.org.uk

### Misteria Paschalia Festival

6-13 Apr, Krakow, Poland

**Box office** +48 22 591 8383  
misteriapaschalia.com

### International Choir Festival and Competition - Slovakia Cantat

23-26 Apr, Bratislava, Slovakia

**Contact** +421 908 693 395,  
info@choral-music.sk  
choral-music.sk

### Cork International Choral Festival

29 Apr-3 May, Cork, Ireland

**Contact** +353 21 4215125,  
info@corkchoral.ie  
corkchoral.ie

### Festival Internazionale Corale

#### Verona Garda Estate

30 Apr-12 Jul, Verona, Italy

**Contact** +39 337 572343,  
info@festivalveronagardaestate.eu  
festivalveronagardaestate.eu

## MAY

### Bristol Early Music

1-3 May, Bristol, UK

**Contact** contact@  
bristolearlymusicfestival.uk  
bristolearlymusicfestival.uk

### Grand Organ Festival of Montreal

1-3 May, Montreal, Canada

**Contact** +1 514 510 5678,  
info@ciocm.org  
ciocm.org

### Leamington Music Festival

1-5 May, Warwick, UK

**Contact** +44 1926 497000,

richard@leamingtonmusic.org

leamingtonmusic.org

### London Festival of Contemporary Church Music

9-17 May, St Pancras, London, UK

**Contact** +44 20 7388 1461

Christopher Batchelor (artistic director), info@lfccm.com

lfccm.com

### London Festival of Baroque Music

9-23 May, London, UK

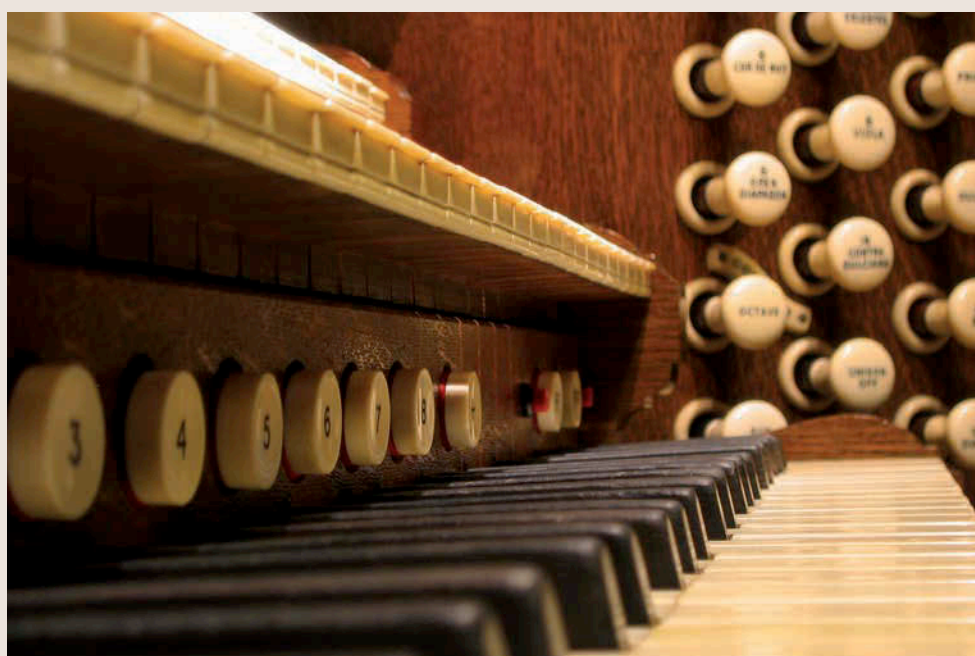
**Box office** +44 20 7222 2168,  
info@lfbm.org.uk

lfbm.org.uk

### Bloomington Early Music Festival

10-17 May, Bloomington, Indiana, USA

**Box office** office@blemf.org  
blemf.org



COURTESY WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

### Westminster Cathedral Grand Organ Festival

20 May-25 Nov, London, UK

Westminster Cathedral continues to build on its reputation as a central focus of the continental organ tradition. The Grand Organ Festival welcomes a regular flow of world-class organists from the UK, Europe and beyond.

**Contact** +44 20 7798 9055, musicadmin@rcdow.org.uk  
westminstercathedralchoir.com



DIOCESE OF LEEDS



#### **Leeds International Organ Festival**

*May-Jul, Leeds, UK*

Under the artistic directorship of David Pipe (pictured), from May to July 2020 renowned international organists will perform on Leeds Cathedral's magnificent Klais organ, including a popular lunchtime recital series. All event information can be found on the website.

[leedsiof.org](http://leedsiof.org)

#### **King's Lynn Festival**

*19 Jul-1 Aug, King's Lynn, Norfolk, UK*

The festival has been bringing internationally renowned performers to west Norfolk since 1951. The 70th festival includes the Royal Philharmonic and Freddy Kempf in a packed fortnight of entertainment from 19 July.

**Box office** +44 1553 764864, [info@kingslynnfestival.org.uk](mailto:info@kingslynnfestival.org.uk)

[kingslynnfestival.org.uk](http://kingslynnfestival.org.uk)



ALBERT/TURNER/HUMAN

#### **Westminster Cathedral Grand Organ Festival**

*20 May-25 Nov, London, UK*

*(see box, previous page)*

[westminstercathedralchoir.com](http://westminstercathedralchoir.com)

#### **Göttingen International Handel Festival**

*20 May-1 Jun, Göttingen, Germany*

**Contact** +49 551 3848130

[haendel-festspiele.de](http://haendel-festspiele.de)

#### **The English Music Festival**

*22-15 May, Dorchester-on-Thames, UK*

**Contact** Em Marshall-Luck,

+44 78084 73889,

[em.marshall-luck@](mailto:em.marshall-luck@englishmusicfestival.org.uk)

[englishmusicfestival.org.uk](http://englishmusicfestival.org.uk)

[englishmusicfestival.org.uk](http://englishmusicfestival.org.uk)

#### **Galway Early Music Festival**

*22-24 May, Galway, Ireland*

**Contact** +353 83461 9039,

[info@galwayearlymusic.com](mailto:info@galwayearlymusic.com)

[galwayearlymusic.com](http://galwayearlymusic.com)

#### **St Davids Cathedral Festival**

*22-31 May, Pembrokeshire, UK*

*(see box, opposite)*

[stdavidscathedralfestival.co.uk](http://stdavidscathedralfestival.co.uk)

#### **Spoleto Festival USA**

*22 May-7 Jun, Charleston, South Carolina, USA*

**Box office** +1 843 579 3100

[spoletousa.org](http://spoletousa.org)

#### **Leeds International Organ Festival**

*May-Jul, Leeds, UK*

*(see box, top left)*

[leedsiof.org](http://leedsiof.org)

#### **JUNE**

#### **Limerick Sings - International Choral Festival**

*5-7 Jun, Limerick, Ireland*

**Contact** Jennifer Flewett,

+353 61 331549, +353 61 213312,

[information@limericksings.com](mailto:information@limericksings.com)

[limericksings.com](http://limericksings.com)

#### **International Tuscany Music and Choir Festival in Montecatini Terme**

*11-14 Jun, Montecatini Terme,*

*Tuscany, Italy*

**Contact** [musicultur.com](http://musicultur.com)

#### **Bratislava Choir & Orchestra Festival**

*11-14 Jun, Bratislava, Slovakia*

**Contact** +421 908 693 395,  
info@choral-music.sk  
choral-music.sk

**Bachfest Leipzig**  
11-21 Jun, Leipzig, Germany  
**Contact** +49 341 9137 300,  
bachfest@bach-leipzig.de  
bachfestleipzig.de

**Aldeburgh Festival**  
12-28 Jun, Suffolk, UK  
**Box office** +44 1728 687110  
snapemaltings.co.uk

**Montreal Baroque Festival**  
20-23 Jun, Montreal, Canada  
**Contact** +1 514 845 7171,  
info@montrealbaroque.com  
montrealbaroque.com

**St Magnus International Festival**  
21-27 Jun, Orkney, UK

**Contact** +44 1856 871445,  
info@stmagnusfestival.com  
stmagnusfestival.com

**ION Musica Sacra Festival**  
26 Jun-6 Jul, Nuremberg, Germany  
**Contact** info@musikfest-ion.de  
musikfest-ion.de

**Deal Music & Arts**  
26 Jun-11 Jul, East Kent, UK  
**Contact** Willie Cooper (general manager), +44 1227 786111,  
irondraw@btinternet.com  
dealmusicandarts.com

**Spitalfields Festival**  
Late Jun, Spitalfields, London, UK  
**Contact** +44 20 7377 0287  
**Box office** +44 20 7377 1362  
spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk

## JULY

**East Neuk Festival**  
1-5 Jul, Fife, UK  
**Contact** +44 330 22 11 093,  
ian@eastneukfestival.com  
eastneukfestival.com

**JAM on the Marsh**  
1-11 Jul, Romney Marsh, Kent, UK  
(see box, p.51)  
jamconcert.org

**Choral Festival of Preveza**  
2-5 Jul (tbc), Preveza, Greece  
**Contact** +30 26820 24915,  
info@choralpreveza.gr  
carnifest.com

**International Choral Festival Wales**  
3-5 Jul, Cardiff, UK  
**Contact** 58 Drum Tower View,  
Caerphilly CF83 2XW  
internationalchoralfestival.wales  
**Method & Madness – York Early Music Festival**  
3-11 Jul, York, UK  
**Box office** +44 1904 658338  
ncem.co.uk

**Cheltenham Music Festival**  
3-12 Jul, Cheltenham, UK  
**Box office** +44 1242 850270,  
boxoffice@cheltenhamfestivals.com  
cheltenhamfestivals.com

**Buxton International Festival**  
3-19 Jul, Buxton, UK  
**Box office** +44 1298 72190  
buxtonfestival.co.uk

**11th World Choir Games**  
5-15 Jul, Flanders, Belgium  
**Box office** +32 34 0000 34  
interkultur.com

**Amherst Early Music Festival**  
5-19 Jul, New London, Connecticut, USA

**Contact** +1 781 488 3337,  
info@amherstearlymusic.org  
amherstearlymusic.org

**International Youth Music Festival**  
7-10 Jul, Bratislava, Slovakia  
**Contact** +421 908 693 395,  
info@choral-music.sk  
choral-music.sk

**Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod**  
7-12 Jul, Llangollen, UK  
**Box office** +44 1978 862001,  
music@llangollen.net  
international-eisteddfod.co.uk

**Oundle International Festival**  
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**Lichfield Festival**  
9-19 Jul, Lichfield, UK  
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**Madison Early Music Festival**  
11-18 Jul, Madison, Wisconsin, USA  
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memf.wisc.edu

**Summer Organ Festival**  
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westminster-abbey.org

**Southern Cathedrals Festival**  
17-19 Jul, Winchester, UK  
**Contact** information@  
southerncathedralsfestival.org.uk  
southerncathedralsfestival.org.uk

**King's Lynn Festival**  
19 Jul-1 Aug, King's Lynn, Norfolk, UK  
(see box, opposite)  
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**FIMA - Festival di Musica Antica**  
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##### Lamèque International Festival of Baroque Music

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##### IAO Music Festival

24-28 Jul, Edinburgh, UK

[iao.org.uk](http://iao.org.uk)

##### Three Choirs Festival

25 Jul-1 Aug, Worcestershire, UK

**Box office** 01452 768928

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##### Tallinn International Organ Festival

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##### MAfestival Brugge

31 Jul-9 Aug, Bruges, Belgium

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##### Donaufestwochen

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◀ **Le Festival International de Musique Ancienne de Simiane**

2-13 Aug, Simiane-la-Rotonde, France

**Contact** +33 49275 9014,  
[festivalaccueil@gmail.com](mailto:festivalaccueil@gmail.com)  
[festival-simiane.com](http://festival-simiane.com)

**Lahti International Organ Festival**

3-9 Aug, Lahti, Finland

**Contact** +358 3 877 230,  
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[lahtiorgan.fi](http://lahtiorgan.fi)

**Edinburgh International Festival**

7-31 Aug, Edinburgh, UK

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**Norfolk Chamber Music Festival Chamber Choir and Choral Conducting Workshop**

9-16 Aug, Norfolk, Connecticut, USA

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[deanne.chin@yale.edu](mailto:deanne.chin@yale.edu)  
[norfolkmusic.org](http://norfolkmusic.org)

**Nordic Song Festival**

10-18 Aug, Trollhättan, Norway

**Contact** via website  
[nordicsongfestival.com](http://nordicsongfestival.com)

**Presteigne Festival**

27 Aug-1 Sep, Presteigne, UK

(see box, previous page)  
[presteignefestival.com](http://presteignefestival.com)

**Utrecht Early Music Festival**

28 Aug-6 Sep, Utrecht, Netherlands

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**International Choir Festival - 'In the Footsteps of Ludwig van Beethoven'**

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[thecumnocktryst.com](http://thecumnocktryst.com)

**Toulouse les Orgues**

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[toulouse-les-orgues.org](http://toulouse-les-orgues.org)

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[miltonkeynesmuseum.org.uk](http://miltonkeynesmuseum.org.uk)

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[cimcf.uk](http://cimcf.uk)

**Organ Festival Holland**

21-28 Jun, Alkmaar, Netherlands

**Contact**  
[info@orgelfestivalholland.nl](mailto:info@orgelfestivalholland.nl)  
[orgelfestivalholland.nl](http://orgelfestivalholland.nl)

**St Albans International Organ Festival and Competition**

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# Given a voice

Having launched just seven years ago, a Cambridge choir is bringing the neglected choral works of William Mathias to public attention through its first album. **Adrian Horsewood** meets director of music Graham Walker

The grandiose George Gilbert Scott-designed chapel of St John's College, Cambridge – the tallest college chapel in the city – reverberates with the music of divine worship every day of the week in university term-time, and services there are heard in person by hundreds of visitors from all over the world, and by thousands via live webcast.

The all-male College Choir, under the leadership of current director of music Andrew Nethsingha, is enjoying a period of particular excellence, and is in residence in the choir stalls six days a week; however, those who attend on a Monday evening will find themselves in the presence of St John's Voices (SJV), founded in 2013 and open to any student from any college in Cambridge.

Graham Walker – himself a former chorister and undergraduate choral scholar at St John's – has been in charge of SJV since the very beginning, and he's proud of how much the choir has achieved in such a short time: 'When I was a student at St John's there was a mixed-voice choir in the college, but it was entirely student-led and so subject to the vagaries of varying numbers year-on-year, academic pressures, and perennial student apathy...! Furthermore, because there was nobody in College overseeing it, it meant that there was no real institutional memory, as every three years the membership was completely different.'

That choir gradually petered out around 20 years ago; but in 2013 Walker was approached by St John's – largely at Nethsingha's urging – to return and build something new from the ground up: '[Nethsingha] felt there was a huge appetite in the college for a well-run,

regularly-performing choir that could be open to both male and female students. From the outset, Andrew and everyone in college made it clear that SJV would be very much part of the institution as a sister choir. One seldom gets the chance to start something from scratch with such freedom, but we found that whenever we pushed against a closed door it would open.'

At the beginning, says Walker, everything was rather 'experimental', with no timetable or objectives having been set by the college, so the choir could simply progress at its own pace. Starting out with around a dozen singers, the choir spent a fortnight rehearsing for its first service of Dyson's unison evening canticles in C minor, the Ferial Preces and Responses, and Samuel Sebastian Wesley's *Lead me, Lord* – 'hardly earth-shattering stuff!' laughs Walker. 'But they all sang beautifully, and right from the start there was a real warmth and enthusiasm. Happily, I think it didn't take us too long to confound people's expectations and start to build a reputation.' That reputation received a quick boost when another Cambridge college chapel choir suddenly had to pull out of a summer tour of the Far East, and SJV stepped in at short notice: 'It was a steep learning curve for us all, but a fantastic musical and social experience.'

Walker talks with almost avuncular pride of how the choir has developed during its first seven years: 'I've had great joy in seeing students grow over three or four years in the choir, as they develop a sense of the possibilities that music can give them – they don't necessarily have to want to sing professionally in order to take pride in a job done well. It's wonderful to see the buzz someone gets on their first encounter with great music. We've also been very lucky in

◀ St John's Voices record their first CD, of music by William Mathias, in the Chapel of St John's College, Cambridge





◀ terms of attracting people to sing: being a mixed-voice choir that only does one regular rehearsal and service a week, as well as having the allure of a gorgeous building and fabulous acoustics, has meant that as well as having plenty of undergraduates perhaps singing in a large choir for the first time, we've become a home for a lot of people who were choral scholars as undergraduates but aren't able to commit to as busy a schedule now that they're postgraduates.'

## 'Mathias is hugely underrated as a composer, but I firmly believe his time will come again'

This steady year-on-year growth – SJV now numbers 30 singers in its ranks – has led to the latest feather in the choir's cap, its first recording. Released in January of this year on the Naxos label, it features the music of a composer whom Walker met while a chorister at St John's, and whose music has remained in his subconscious ever since. 'In 1988 William Mathias was commissioned by St John's College and George Guest – then director of music – to write a piece marking the 400th anniversary of the translation

◀ St John's Voices director Graham Walker: 'It's wonderful to see the buzz someone gets on their first encounter with great music'

of the Bible into Welsh by a St John's alumnus, Bishop William Morgan. As part of the celebrations we travelled to Bangor to perform the piece, and I remember Mathias being extremely warm and welcoming, particularly to us choristers.'

Fast-forward 30 years: SJV was approaching its fifth anniversary and Walker felt the time was right to make a recording. In researching repertoire ideas, only one real contender emerged. Walker

had come across Mathias's *Learsongs* in the early 2000s when he was with a choir in London, and they had stayed in his mind: 'They are absolutely wonderful, especially in how Mathias sets Edward Lear's words. Yes, he lets the humorous and the surreal shine through, but he also knows how to catch the slight sadness that infuses so much of Lear's poetry, and injects just that little bit of pathos into the music to reflect that.' Like much of Mathias's music, Walker adds, there was no recording of the *Learsongs* in existence, 'and I discovered this was a bit of a recurring theme across all his output. The Jesus College Evening Service and *A Babe is*





*Born* are well represented on disc – though that never meant we were going to leave them off our recording – but that's pretty much it for his choral music. I think Mathias is hugely underrated as a composer, being viewed as somehow “unfashionable”, but I firmly believe his time will come again.’

Walker admits to being particularly pleased with the variety on the album: ‘There’s a mix of the hard and the simple, the sacred and the secular, the conventional and the anarchic, the “English choral” sound and a more “misty” style – the latter in the short but lovely French-inspired *Ave verum corpus*. We’ve made sure to include the Welsh work that I sang as a chorister for Mathias, *Y Nefoedd sydd yn datgan gogoniant Duw* [‘The heavens declare the glory of God’], as well as *A May Magnificat*, which I think is an absolute masterpiece.’

Also on the disc is *Riddles*, which sets seven Anglo-Saxon riddles (in translations by Kevin Crossley-Holland) for chorus, a six-strong male close-harmony ensemble, bells, and piano. It was commissioned by the Vancouver Chamber Choir for performance alongside The King’s Singers, so it presented the perfect opportunity for SJV similarly to collaborate with the Gentlemen of St John’s (the College’s professional vocal ensemble, comprising organ and choral scholars). Walker found recording the disc ‘a hugely



JAMES PROCTOR

▲ St John's Voices pair with the Gentlemen of St John's in Mathias's *Riddles*

enjoyable experience for everyone involved, and I'm delighted that we're playing a part in the rediscovery of Mathias's music.’

Walker and his choir won't be resting on their newly acquired laurels, though: they have a summer tour to Germany to look forward to – taking in Berlin, Dresden, Hanover, and Lübeck – as well as another recording, this time of music by Alex Woolf, a current recipient of the Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize and former BBC Young Composer of the Year, who sang in SJV while an undergraduate at St John's. ‘Alex

is utterly delightful – in fact, he was among my very first intake of singers – and writes in a lovely, accessible style. It's a joy to sing and to listen to without being overly simplistic or dumbing-down, and we're all looking forward to getting started next year.’ ■ [stjohnsvoices.org](http://stjohnsvoices.org)

*Adrian Horsewood is associate editor of Classical Music and a freelance singer; he is currently working towards a PhD in 17th-century Roman sacred music at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.*





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# Performance review

Kirk Michael Rich explores keyboard articulation practices in Mendelssohn's day, including the use of the slur and its various meanings

## part 3 Mendelssohn: Organ Sonata no.2



Published in 1845, Felix Mendelssohn's Six Sonatas, op.65, were among the most significant organ works to appear after the death of J.S. Bach. These pieces have since become a mainstay in the organ repertory, enjoyed by amateur and professional organists alike. Almost certainly due to its somewhat moderate technical difficulty, Sonata no.2 in C minor is often the first of Mendelssohn's organ works assigned by teachers to young pupils, the present author included. Yet this piece presents a number of performance issues, not the least of which concerns the composer's numerous slur markings that so often evade modern performers.

### A case for legato

Since slurs often have consequences for articulation, their proper execution depends entirely on how they function within the basic articulation of a specific period – that is to say, the touch employed for passages or entire pieces without slurs. Primary source documentation, particularly piano and organ methods published c.1795-1850, establish a legato keyboard culture that was in place before Mendelssohn was even born, let alone before the publication of his organ works.

A number of important organ methods published in Germany deal with articulation, perhaps the earliest being the *Vollständige Orgelschule für Anfänger und Geübtere* ('Complete Organ Method for Beginners and Experienced Players') of Justin Heinrich Knecht (1752-1817), written between 1795 and 1798. Knecht writes: ▶

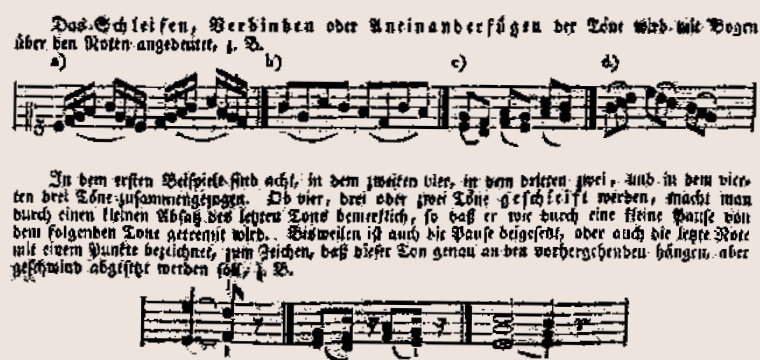
◀ Felix Mendelssohn: his Six Sonatas are a mainstay in the organ repertory



Ex.1: Mendelssohn, Sonata no.2/I. Grave-Adagio, bars 1-2 – a motive of slurred pairs.



Ex.2: An example of articulation slurs from Johann Gottlob Werner's *Orgelschule* (1807).



Ex.3: Mendelssohn, Sonata no.2/I. Grave-Adagio, bars 1-5 – entry of the secondary motive in bar 4; the first note is not slurred.



Ex.4: Ibid/I. bars 10-11 – the pedal uses the same articulation (Coventry and Hollier edition, 1845).



Ex.5: Ibid/I. bars 8-9 – this time, the first note is included in the slur.



◁ As the organ is known to be composed of many kinds of pipes which are sounded by the wind coming from the bellows by means of an internal mechanics arranged for this purpose, and are therefore capable of a sustained and singing tone of the highest degree: so it is self-evident that the distinctive nature of the organ lies pre-eminently in a persistent, continually singing tone, and that it is her foremost and most noble purpose to play, first and foremost, elongated notes and chords.<sup>1</sup>

Knecht continues:

Moreover, the notes must be played consistently, that is, when the practitioner lifts his fingers to move to the next notes, he must make effort that his fingers slide evenly from one key to the next, especially at a series of chords, so that the ear does not sense the slightest distinction between notes.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most significant organist of the period who promoted legato articulation was Christian Heinrich Rinck (1770-1846). Rinck authored his second organ tutor in 1839, the *Theoretisch-practische Anleitung zum Orgelspielen* ('Theoretical-Practical Handbook on Organ Playing'), op.124, published in two volumes. In it, Rinck asserts:

Since the organ, by its very nature, is primarily suited for slow, connected movements, the organ player must thus pay special attention that he joins the notes together in his performance; that is, he must proceed from one note to the next in such a way that the ear cannot detect the slightest separation or gap between the tones.<sup>3</sup>

Mendelssohn was, of course, primarily trained at the piano. From 1817-22 he studied with Berlin's most important pianist, Ludwig Berger (1777-1839), who had himself been a student of Muzio Clementi (1752-1832). By 1801, Clementi had established the primacy of legato as the 'normal' keyboard-playing style in his method *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte*:

When the composer leaves the legato and staccato to the performer's taste [i.e. when neither slurring nor staccato is indicated]; the best rule is, to adhere chiefly to the legato; reserving the staccato to give spirit occasionally to certain passages and to set off the higher beauties of the legato.<sup>4</sup>

Through Berger we can place Mendelssohn in direct lineage to Clementi, who had adopted the legato style at least by the first decade of the 19th century. Within this understanding, slurs were no longer necessary simply to indicate legato as they had in the previous centuries and, therefore, took on additional meanings.

Having established that legato was the basic articulation for Mendelssohn, we now consider ways in which slurs function within this legato texture. It is important to note that, as slurs took on new meanings over time, they did not always necessarily shed their older implications. Indicating articulation, for example, is the oldest use of the slur in keyboard music, yet Mendelssohn and later composers continued to use slurs in this way while adopting more modern uses. As slurs have been assigned multiple notational functions, it has become more difficult for performers to identify the composer's intent.

## Mendelssohn's slur markings often evade modern performers

### Articulation slurs

The opening *Grave* of Mendelssohn's Second Sonata introduces a motive composed of slurred pairs [Ex.1]. Several early 19th-century organ methods give examples of these articulation slurs, including Johann Gottlob Werner [Ex.2]. In his *Orgelschule oder Anleitung zum Orgelspielen und zur richtigen Behandlung des Instrumentes* ('Organ School or Manual on Organ Playing and the Correct Treatment of the Instrument') of 1807, the author states that

... whether four, three, or two notes are slurred, this is made apparent by a slight detachment of the last note, so that it is separated, as if with a short rest, from the following note."<sup>5</sup>

While most examples of slurred pairs, including Werner's, begin on a strong beat within the measure, Mendelssohn's motive begins on a weak beat slurring into what would normally be a stronger one, thereby thwarting the normal rhythmic hierarchy. In placing a slur over what would typically be a weak upbeat, the first note or chord must be played in such a way as showing that it

**Ex.6:** Carl Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School*, op. 50 (1839), with reference to continuous legato slurs.

§ 23. When, however, slurs are drawn over several notes, although the slurs are not continuous, but are broken into several lines, they are considered as forming but one, and no perceptible separation must take place. Ex:



Here the last note of each bar must not be played short or detached; but it must, on the contrary, be connected with the following one.

Should the Composer desire to make it detached, he must place a dot or dash over it.

**Ex.7:** Mendelssohn, Sonata no.2/II. *Allegro maestoso e vivace*, bars 38-40 – note the continuous legato slurs.



is heavier than its subsequent downbeat.

Despite the fact that each slurred pair is followed by a rest, the desired *affekt* will be spoiled if the second chord or note is held for its full value. This is an example of when performers, in their attempt to decipher Mendelssohn's slurring, should imagine how the passage might be played in the absence of slurs.

A secondary motive beginning with the leap of a minor seventh enters in the lower voice of bar 4 [Ex.3]. Because the first note of the motive is not slurred and yet is followed by a slurred group of four notes, one has the possibility of slightly shortening this first note, thereby accentuating the first note of the slurred pair. This same articulation is found in the pedal at bars 10-11 [Ex.4].

Mendelssohn includes the first note of this secondary motive under the slur in bars 8-9 [Ex.5].

Because the composer has provided two articulation possibilities for the same motive, the performer should make an effort to show the difference, rather than playing without an articulation between the first note of the motive and the slurred group in both Ex.3 and Ex.4.

### Continuous legato slurs

Perhaps the most ambiguous use of slurs to our modern eyes are those appearing over consecutive bars. These 'continuous legato' slurs, or *Dauerlegatobogen*, are quite common in late 18th- and 19th-century keyboard writing, appearing frequently in the organ music of Mendelssohn. The clearest description of continuous legato slurs as they may pertain to Mendelssohn comes from the piano method of Carl Czerny (1791-1857), the *Complete Theoretical and Practical Pianoforte School*, op.50 (1839). On the subject of continuous legato slurs, Czerny provides an example with an explanation [Ex.6].

The most obvious examples of continuous legato slurs from Mendelssohn's second sonata can be found in the second movement, *Allegro maestoso e vivace*, beginning in bars 22-23 and appearing again in bars 38-40 [Ex.7]. If we follow Czerny in this instance, these consecutive measure slurs should be played without any separation between them.

Jon Laukvik points out the commonality in these consecutively slurred passages of four notes or more being



- ◀ that the slurred notes are of the same value, and that the figuration remains the same for several bars.<sup>6</sup>

One might then view the slurs in the uppermost voice of bars 45-46 from the Second Sonata's *Adagio* as indicating continuous legato, even though they do not span entire bars [Ex.8].

## Fugues

Appropriate articulation in Mendelssohn's fugues has become a point of contention among various scholars, the full extent of which cannot be unpacked in the present article. The Fugue in C minor, op.37, as well as the fugue from Sonata no.6 in D minor, feature no slurs and include the directive 'legato' in the score ('legato e sostenuto' in the case of the latter). An altogether different sort of fugue is found as the final movement of Sonata no.2. Like many pre-publication versions of Mendelssohn's organ works, the early variant of what would become this final, published work contains no slurs. If the final published version of this

fugue had remained without slurs, a legato approach would be appropriate. However, in the final published work Mendelssohn added many slurs, the result of which is one of the most frustrating issues in his *œuvre*. The slurring of the fugue subject presents a dilemma [Ex.9]: in bars 1-3, we find groups of two or three notes slurred together, which at first glance would be candidates for articulation [q.v. Ex.2]; however, they are also consecutive-bar slurs, which would call for Czerny's continuous legato approach [q.v. Ex.6].

First, one must be careful about applying Czerny's ideas too literally. His example of continuous legato slurring contains generic figurations: ascending and descending scalar patterns, as well as arpeggios. In the example from Mendelssohn's Second Sonata, we are dealing with a fugue subject, something a bit more sophisticated. Here we might consider advice on playing counterpoint from August Gottfried Ritter (1811-85), an organist contemporaneous with Mendelssohn and a fellow Berger pupil. It stands to reason that Ritter's ideas about playing counterpoint

on the organ might be applicable to Mendelssohn.

Ritter's three-volume method, *Kunst des Orgelspiels*, op.15 ('Art of Organ Playing'), first appeared in 1845, the year Mendelssohn's sonatas were published. In his commentary on interpreting the Duetto in A minor, BWV 805 from J.S. Bach's *Clavierübung III* [Ex.10], Ritter states

The first four bars of the theme, in every voice and at every occurrence, require a certain brusqueness [*Schroffheit*] in expression ... Everything else, if not expressly so marked, will be played legato, i.e., connected.<sup>7</sup>

Looking back at Mendelssohn's Second Sonata, one notes that, at times, the concluding fugue's counterpoint is quite dense, and it is not always easy to hear the subject [q.v. Ex.11, in which the subject appears in the tenor voice]. Here, a legato execution would render the subject lost to the listener. While the presence of slurs forbids applying a non-legato or staccato articulation to the notes of the fugue subject, Ritter's desire to bring out a primary theme or motive within contrapuntal textures should be the goal. If one interprets the slurs of the subject as indications of articulation while keeping all the other voices legato, the articulations for the first note of each slurred group help the subject to become more distinct, asserting itself through the counterpoint. Since Mendelssohn was so meticulous as to slur the subject the same way in practically every instance, performers might consider articulating every slur, but only for the subject, and merely playing the rest of the texture legato, no matter the slurring.<sup>8</sup>

Though this survey cannot offer a solution to every question relating to Mendelssohn's slurs or the articulation appropriate to his organ music, it will hopefully provide a basis for understanding Mendelssohn's notation in the context of the early 19th century. ■

*The musical excerpts from Mendelssohn's Second Sonata are drawn from the original Coventry and Hollier edition of 1845.*

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Ex.8: Ibid/I. Grave-Adagio, bars 45-46 – the slurs in the upper voice may indicate continuous legato.



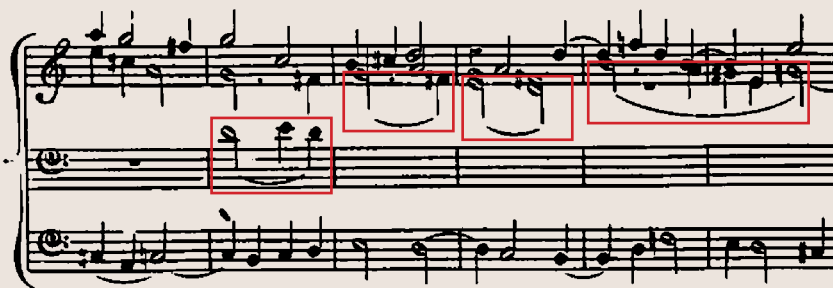
Ex.9: Ibid/III. Fuga-Allegro moderato, bars 1-5 – does the slurring of the fugue subject call for continuous legato?



**Ex.10:** J.S. Bach, Duetto in A minor, BWV 805 (*Clavierübung III*), bars 1-13 (Edition Breitkopf, ed. Carl F. Becker, 1853). Ritter's commentary recommends a certain 'brusqueness' in articulation for the first four bars of the theme each time it is played.



**Ex.11:** Mendelssohn/III. Fuga – Allegro moderato, bars 21-26; legato playing of the fugue subject entry in the tenor voice would likely render it unnoticeable



the Interpretation of Mendelssohn's Organ Music', *Organ-Kenkyu, Annual Report of the Japan Organ Society* 37 (2009): 2-3. English translation by Seraphina Weber.

2. Ibid.

3. Christian Heinrich Rinck, *Theoretisch-practische Anleitung zum Orgelspielen* (Darmstadt, 1839), 43. Quoted in Lohmann, 'Regarding the Interpretation', 3.

4. Muzio Clementi, *Introduction to the Art of playing on the Piano Forte* (London: Clementi, Banger, Hyde, Collard, and Davis, 1801), 9.

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6. Laukvik, op.cit., 240.

7. August Gottfried Ritter, *Kunst des Orgelspiels*,

*op. 15* (Erfurt and Leipzig, 1845), 39. Quoted in Laukvik, 75.

8. To hear an example of this interpretation, I recommend the CD recording *Ludger Lohmann spielt Mendelssohn an der historischen Stumm-Orgel der Abteikirche zu Sayn* [Motette 12471].

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Part 4: Joris Verdin on César Franck's Choral no.3



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# Creative spaces

Since its foundation in the 19th century to bring education to the poor in south London, Morley College has built a reputation for visual and performing arts. Former vice-principal **Nick Rampley** traces the development of the College's choral outreach, under distinguished musicians including Gustav Holst and Michael Tippett.

PHOTOS COURTESY MORLEY COLLEGE

Visitors to London today may very likely include in their tour of the capital the areas of Waterloo and Lambeth, hugging the south bank of the Thames, graced as they are with such landmarks as the Royal Festival Hall, the Hayward Gallery, the National Theatre and National Film Theatre, and Lambeth Palace, the home of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The 19th century told a different story, however: poverty was rife, and alongside physical poverty was educational poverty. Opportunities were to open up, however, thanks to the philanthropist Emma Cons, who took over the Royal Victoria Hall – now the Old Vic theatre, but which at that time was the home of bawdy entertainment –

and used it to present less lewd forms of pastime, including lectures open to the public. The popularity of these lectures led to an endowment being made by Samuel Morley (then a member of parliament for Nottingham) for the opening in 1889 of the Morley Memorial College for Working Men and Women – one of the first adult education colleges in England.

The essence of adult education is inclusivity, and Morley College is a keen example of this, having earned renown particularly for its rich heritage in the performing and visual arts, of which its choral history has played a colourful part. Within three years of the College's opening, a choir was formed; but it was with the

appointment of Gustav Holst as director of music in 1907 that the potential for choral music to help define the College's place in London's cultural and educational life came to be realised. By 1909, Holst had built up a choir proficient enough to perform extracts from Purcell's *King Arthur*, which had been 'rarely heard – never in London within living memory', and, in 1911, the first full performance since the late 17th century of *The Fairy Queen*, a work which had disappeared soon after Purcell's death and been rediscovered less than a decade before. Morley's students not only performed the work, but under Holst's supervision 'a little army of volunteer copyists' had fashioned the parts from the transcription of the

►

▼ Morley College combined choirs rehearse Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, a century after the College revived the work under Gustav Holst





◀ manuscript. The centenary of what had been a much-heralded event was celebrated in 2011 at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall by the College's combined choirs under Harvey Brough, interpolating his own *A Fairy Dream* within the structure of Purcell's work.

Holst was to introduce other choral music neglected at that time, not least through Morley's participation in the unconventional Whitsun festival at Thaxted, where in 1914

as a copyist; she returned to the College as a teacher, encouraging choirs of first-time singers. The egalitarian legacy of Holst and Nutting's 'elementary choir' was to live on in the College's much loved 'Can't Sing' choirs, which under Joan Taylor were to appear on ITV, Channel 4's *Richard and Judy* show, German Television, BBC World Service, and in the *Sunday Telegraph* and the *Independent* newspapers. That legacy continues in today's

the next significant milestone for Morley music was Michael Tippett's sojourn as music director in the 1940s. From very modest war-time beginnings, his choir grew rapidly and included such musicological luminaries as Anthony Hopkins (who was to conduct the choir himself for a brief while), John Amis and Alexander Goehr. While Tippett used his tenure to develop his own compositions (his *Two Madrigals* are dedicated to 'The Morley Choir'), like Holst his passion for early music had far-reaching impact. Morley gave the first British performance of Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers*, while a performance of Gibbons's *My Beloved Spake* provided the occasion when Tippett and Britten were to meet for the first time, and a then unknown Alfred Deller was brought in to take the Madrigal Choir and pioneer the counter-tenor voice. In 1948, under Tippett's famously wayward beat, the Morley choir made the first ever recording of Tallis's celebrated 40-part motet *Spem in alium* (a recording now available on an NMC CD), which a more recent Morley choir performed at the Roundhouse's *Voices Now* festival in 2012. Just as the 1948 choir had

## Under Holst's supervision, 'a little army of volunteer copyists' fashioned the parts of *The Fairy Queen* from the transcription of the manuscript

he had made his home. Between 1916 and 1918, Morley choirs performed works by the masters of renaissance polyphony – Palestrina, Lassus, Victoria and Byrd – as well as introducing Holst's own *Three Festival Choruses* and *Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day*; the latter was dedicated to Conrad Noel, Thaxted's outspokenly socialist priest. Among the enthusiastic Morleyites was Dulcie Nutting, who went on to assist Holst

'Anyone Can Sing' and 'Find Your Voice' ensembles. Holst's observation, that there were plenty of places for people to go who could sing and play but that Morley was also there for those who could not, is a truism that has endured.

Yet there were and are many who certainly can sing. In the 1920s and 30s, the choir continued to thrive, including serenading Vaughan Williams on his 50th birthday; but

▼ Building a choral tradition: (top row, l to r) Gustav Holst and the Morley Choir and Orchestra at the Thaxted Whitsun Festival, 1916; the Can't Sing Choir; (bottom row, l to r) Michael Tippett, music director in the 1940s; and Denys Darlow conducting the Chamber Choir in the 1950s





▲ Recent activities: (l, from top) the Can't Sing Choir at Lambeth Country Show; the Kenningtones, one of Morley's community-based choirs; (r) Andrea Brown rehearses the Chamber Choir in Tippett's *A Child of Our Time*

been bolstered by a few professionals from St Paul's Cathedral, so did the BBC Singers help keep 2012's performance on track.

The highpoint of Tippett's directorship was perhaps the 1944 premiere of *A Child of Our Time*, the Morley Choir under the more reliable baton of Walter Goehr, one of many refugees from Nazi Europe brought to Morley by Tippett. In 2013 Morley provided a new twist to the work with its 'A Choir of Our Time' project, which saw Tippett's pacifist oratorio performed at the Royal Festival Hall (again with support from the BBC Singers) and involving some 400 singers, including eight community choirs from Lambeth and Southwark in the spirituals. For the majority, many of whom did not read music, performing in an international venue with an orchestra was a one-off experience which saw Morley's inclusiveness writ large.

The second half of Morley's story has seen no diminishing of the breadth of its choral provision. From the 1950s to the 1970s Denys Darlow, founder of the London Handel Festival, played an important role, his Tilford Bach Festival Choir being formally convened as an evening class and attracting high-calibre singers including students from the London music colleges, many of whom were to go on to have distinguished professional careers. At the same time as this continuity of interest in the music of earlier times, a series of distinguished composer-conductors including such varied musicians as Peter Racine Fricker, John Gardner and Michael

Graubart led choirs of various shapes and sizes in often challenging repertoire. One example among many was the premiere of Elizabeth Maconchy's *Nocturnal*, a work commissioned by and dedicated to the Morley Choir, at the 1965 Cork International Music Festival. Graham Treacher, the choir's conductor at the time (and who together with Imogen Holst was to revive Morley's participation at Thaxted), recalled that afterwards some of the choir 'ended up in a late night fish-and-chip bar singing for our supper part of Byrd's Five-Part Mass'.

Into the late 20th and early 21st centuries, teams of specialist choral tutors catering for the diversity of styles and accomplishment which continues today were led by two luminaries: Bob Hanson, whose *And There Shall be No Night There*, a 40-voice companion to the Tallis motet, was particularly memorable for the Chamber Choir; and the outstanding choral trainer Andrea Brown, who directed the modern-day Morley performances of *Spem* and *A Child of Our Time* mentioned above. Today, Morley sports six choirs: three classical, one folk, one jazz, and one offering mixed repertoire. While Morley Choral Society performs standard large-scale works of the 17th to 20th century (such as, recently, Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* at The Actors' Church, St Paul's, Covent Garden), the auditioned Morley Chamber Choir is currently preparing a performance of MacMillan's *Seven Last Words from the*

*Cross*; the Meridian Choir, which rehearses at lunchtime, is a regular visitor singing Evensong at Southwark Cathedral and performs works by College composition students; and The Kenningtones, a thriving and constantly growing non-auditioned community choir, performs in a variety of styles and at charity events at Morley and around Southwark. As current head of vocal studies Michalis Angelakis (late of the Royal Opera House's community choir) says, 'Morley continues to provide an outstanding creative space and performance opportunities that cater for singers of all abilities and interests.'

A notice in the December 1919 Morley magazine jokingly announced: 'On Saturday, 20 December, the music students will sing and play carols in the Lecture Hall from 8pm to 10pm. As there will be no rehearsals, Mr Holst says that the performance may leave something to be desired from the listener's point of view, therefore the audience is advised to sing as loudly as possible in order to drown out other people's mistakes.' We can perhaps understand why Holst's choir members described Morley as 'a sort of heaven we go to on Mondays and Wednesdays'. In 2020, heaven is not limited to just two days of the week. ■

*Nick Rampley was until recently Morley's vice-principal. A keen musician, he was a sometime member of its chamber choir, taking part in some of the performances referred to above.*





▲ Yves Fossaert (centre) with Florent Séchet (l) and Yves Rousseau (r) discuss the firm's latest project

# Work in progress

A new organ for a medieval French town was occupying the full team in Yves Fossaert's Mondreville workshop when **Pierre Dubois** dropped by. WORKSHOP PHOTOS BY PIERRE DUBOIS

Whoever has had the opportunity to see organ builders at work may legitimately wonder at the impressive array of techniques and the depth of knowledge, versatility and ingenuity that their craft requires. Becoming an organ builder is a lifelong process, as each new project raises new problems and difficulties, which in their turn yield new solutions and increase the dedicated craftsman's

competence and ability to face different challenges. In very few other technical jobs is it necessary to master so many different skills applied to so many different materials, not to mention the design of the instrument and the requisite musical knowledge. Training is therefore of paramount importance for aspiring organ builders, so they may gradually learn the rules of the art and develop their own individual

personality as future independent craftsmen and artists. Those among well-established organ builders who are willing to impart and share their knowledge and techniques to newcomers in the field must consequently be praised. Yves Fossaert is one of them.

Fossaert first started studying musicology at Paris-Sorbonne, but soon veered towards organ building on the advice of his organ teacher, the late André Isoir. He then trained

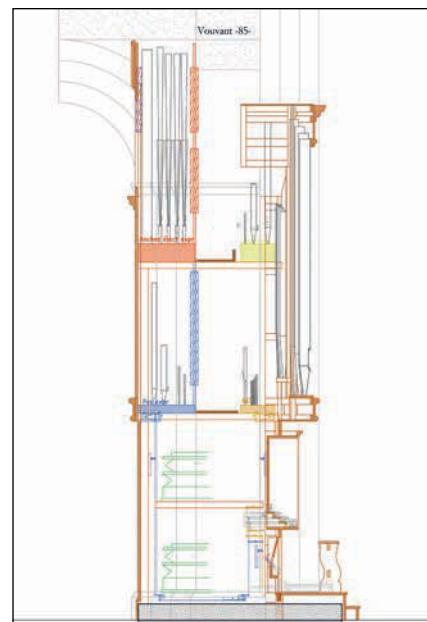
for ten years under G rald Guillem n and Jean-Fran ois Muno, and qualified in Alsace as a companion organ builder. He then joined the workshop of Georg Westenfelder in Luxemburg before setting up his own workshop in 1988, and settling in Mondreville in the Seine-et-Marne *d partement*, south of Paris, in 1994. From 1999 to 2001, he chaired the Groupement Professionnel des Facteurs d'Orgues fran ais (GPFO), the French equivalent of the Institute of British Organ Building or the American Institute of Organbuilders. He was awarded the title of Master Craftsman in 2003 and supervised the 2004-07 promotion of apprentices at the national centre for the training of organ builders (GFFO) at Eschau, in Alsace. In 2017, his workshop was awarded the National Prize of Experienced Masters (Prix National du Ma tre d'Apprentissage) in the category

'Exchange and transfer of experience and/or technologies.' Upon receiving the award, Fossaert declared that he had always been keen on letting his apprentices create their own experience in the workshop: 'I like them to go beyond the limits of the instructions given them so they can discover their own personality.' He is proud that two of his former apprentices – Quentin Requier and his wife Floriane, a pipe-maker – founded their own firm in 2013, and today the Requier and Fossaert workshops sometimes work together. The exchange with his apprentices has enabled Fossaert to make the structure of his workshop evolve. For instance, in 1999, the conversion of the firm to computer aided design (CAD) was prompted by a former apprentice, Florent S chet, who is still in charge of CAD design today. In 2002, another apprentice helped Fossaert to discover a new way of glueing

wooden pipes, which is now regularly used in the workshop. Fossaert has been a training-master for 30 years and the award is well deserved.

Today, the workforce consists of six people: Yves Fossaert, responsible for the general conception and the voicing of the instruments; Florent S chet, workshop manager; Yann Chereau, cabinet-maker; Florent Debord (who, incidentally, worked for Harrison & Harrison for some time); apprentice Pierre Furnon, pipe-maker; and Sandra Da Silva, secretary and accountant. Apart from the restoration of organs and harmoniums, the workshop specialises in the building of new organs following traditional techniques. Some 30 new instruments have been built over the years, and restorations include such organs as those of Saint-Germain-des-Pr s, Saint-Antoine-des-Quinze-Vingts

▼ The new organ for the medieval town of Vouvant under way: (clockwise, from top left) Side of a front pillar; CAD drawings of the front and side elevations; the bellows; Florent S chet and Yves Rousseau scrutinise the design; the frame under construction in the workshop







▲ (clockwise, from above) The voicing chest; Cavaillé-Coll Trumpet pipes of the Notre-Dame-de-Lorette organ, Paris; the tools of the trade

◀ and Saint-Jean-de-Montmartre in Paris, and Bourges Cathedral. Between 2012 and 2014, they restored the 1846 Cavaillé-Coll organ of the Temple de Pentemont in Paris, in cooperation with the Pellerin et Uys workshop. Today, they are restoring the precious historic Cavaillé-Coll organs of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette (1836) and St-Bernard-de-la-Chapelle (1862) in Paris.

the association Orgue et Musique à Vouvant that Rousseau founded in 2016. Rousseau, who is an organist (for 20 years, he was assistant to Eric Lebrun at Saint-Antoine-des-Quinze-Vingts), has solid expertise in cultural projects. He has been adviser for numerous recordings (in particular those with the conductor Michel Piquemal, with whom he worked for 15 years) and DVDs

## Fossaert's young, enthusiastic, friendly and well-knit team enjoys the challenge

A brand-new organ (Opus 35) was being built in the workshop at the time of my visit. It is to be erected in the Church of Notre-Dame in the small medieval town of Vouvant (830 inhabitants), in the Vendée region, a place in which a strong British community resides. Strangely, although the town is visited by numerous tourists, there has so far been no organ in the church, and the new instrument will therefore be used both for religious services and for various cultural purposes (concerts, teaching, etc.). The project was initiated by Yves Rousseau, the former artistic head of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris and a professional music adviser. It is supported by

(including that of the organ of Notre-Dame in Paris, featuring Olivier Latry, in 2015), and he has long been involved in the organ world and the French musical scene. From the start, his intention was to raise all the funding of the Vouvant organ (some 400,000 euros) via private donations, cultural patronage and corporate sponsorship, without any state or institutional involvement, which gave him complete freedom to choose the organ builder he wanted. The decision to have an organ built was given the green light, and it has enabled the restoration of parts of the church and its electrical installation.

As the section of the church where services are held was restored in the

19th century, and because of Rousseau's personal taste for the instruments of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll and Louis Debierre, it was decided to build an organ in the symphonic style, entirely devised by Rousseau himself. Because of the lack of space between the two pillars in the nave between which the instrument is planned to be erected, it was conceived rather as a large chancel organ ('Grand-Orgue de Chœur'), speaking directly to the audience. It will have 18 real stops (around 1,000 pipes), but 42 drawstops on three manuals (two of which being expressive, as in some three-manual organs by Debierre, a direct and avowed influence) and pedals. Keen on improvisation and drawn to the music of 20th-century French composers such as Debussy, Ravel, et al., Rousseau favours versatility and the possibility of changing colours, rather than sheer size and power. Although the organ is in the symphonic style, it is conceived primarily as a chamber instrument. Before the Vouvant project was launched, Rousseau had asked Fossaert to build a house-organ (Opus 34) along similar principles for his own home. The idea was to have as much flexibility as possible, and, although the organ only contains three-and-a-half stops, these can be played in various combinations from three manual keyboards (including one in a swell box) and pedals – quite a technical challenge for the organ builder, considering the limited space available!

The Vouvant Grand-Orgue manual will contain seven stops (and 13 drawstops) on two wind-chests: a mechanical chest with Montre 8, Prestant 4, Flûte conique 2, Plein jeu, Clarinette 8, and an electro-magnetic extension unit chest with Bourdon 16, extended to Bourdon 8 and Flûte douce 4, and a Flûte harmonique 8. These stops can be borrowed on the pedals. The second manual is the Positif, which is enclosed. It will contain seven stops and be mechanical. The third manual, called Résonance, will also be enclosed and will contain three stops (and 10 drawstops) on an electro-magnetic extension unit chest, with Quintaton 16 (extended to 8), Trompette 8 (extended to Basson 16 and Clairon 4) and Basson-Hautbois 8. Some stops of the Grand-Orgue can be played from this manual: the Bourdon 16, Flûte harmonique 8, Bourdon

8 and Flûte douce 4. For reasons of space, the pedal department is to contain only one specific stop, but ranks borrowed from the Grand-Orgue can be played on it, as mentioned above. Thanks to the original disposition with two swell boxes, one of which has two different sets of louvres controlled by two separate pedals (three swell pedals in all), the organ will enable subtle expression, including for the pedal department. The organ will be equipped with a sequencer and a pedal-divide. As far as the voicing is concerned, Fossaert explains that the organ will be rather dark in tone, not unlike the early organs by Cavaillé-Coll. It is to be voiced softly, in the spirit of the Debierre chancel organ of Nantes Cathedral, which has 22 stops and eight borrowed stops on three manuals. It is to be inaugurated by Philippe Lefebvre, Eric Lebrun, Marie-Ange Leurent and Guillaume Marionneau on 27 and 28 June 2020.

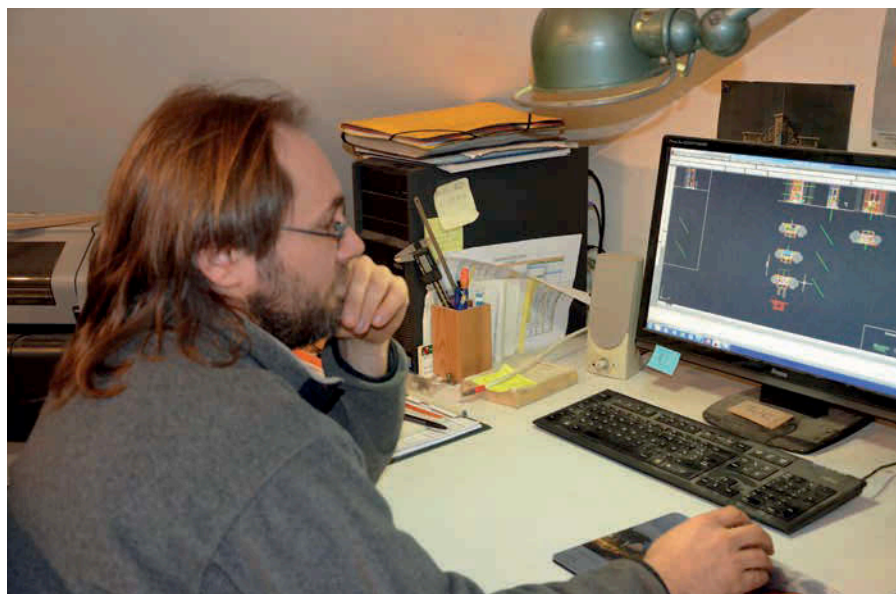
At the time of my visit, the organ was beginning to take shape. The case, which evolved gradually in the course of the CAD-design process, is currently being erected in the workshop, with its finely crafted top-cornices, and the structure of the future instrument is clearly visible, with the bellows (due to work on different pressures) on two levels. Rousseau is a demanding customer with exacting personal conceptions, and so the project has manifestly implied much reflection and discussion before coming to fruition. Fossaert's young, enthusiastic, friendly and well-knit team obviously enjoys the challenge. The Vouvant organ will be used for a rich programme of concerts and masterclasses, and there is no doubt that Rousseau will put his long experience in cultural management to good use. Fossaert's skill and his experience in restoring organs and building new ones in various styles

should guarantee the success of this original project. My visit to his workshop was a refreshing one: here is a collected, thoughtful artisan who wisely stays well away from the limelight or over-ambitious, mind-blowing projects, and prefers instead to concentrate on the construction of reasonably sized, traditional organs that are thoroughly and meticulously designed and built. ■  
*orgues-fossaert.com*

*Many thanks to Yves Fossaert and his team for their friendly welcome, to Yves Rousseau for being present on the day of my visit, and to David Ponsford for reading an early draft of this article.*

*A retired university professor of English, Pierre Dubois is a specialist in 18th-century English music and literature. A self-taught musician, he is titulaire of the historic F.-H. Clicquot organ (1783) of Souvigny, France.*

▼ Meet the team: (clockwise, from top left) Florent Séchet, in charge of CAD; director Yves Fossaert; cabinet-maker Yann Chereau; pipe-maker Pierre Furnon; accountant Sandra Da Silva





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## David Hill answers your questions about all matters relating to choirs and their conductors

### Is warming-up important?

Yes! But why? Exercising any part of the body requires thought. When I worked with a church choir in Florida (who never warmed up), I detected more than a little cynicism. I then asked how many of them played golf. Most raised their hands. 'So, do you play the first hole without having limbered up?' All agreed they played better after some physical preparation. When I suggested it was no different for singing, they understood. But choirs are often stretched for rehearsal time, so warming-up needs to be efficient, taking

probably no more than 5-10 minutes. Even before arriving, I encourage singers to hum up and down on an 'ng' sound. This stretches the vocal folds to cope with the rigours of singing, as vocal tiring is the most reported problem by amateur singers.

### Here are some areas for focus:

- **Physical:** make enough room for you and your neighbour to stretch arms, legs and swivel the torso from side to side. Slowly move your head from side to side, then massage around the eyes and cheeks to help to refresh muscles. Like any exercise, you can increase the speed of the physical activity, but always stay within your own comfort zone.
- **Breathing:** the correct way of breathing for singing involves expanding the ribcage, allowing space for air to fill the lungs – try blowing out an imaginary candle with short bursts of 'sh', 'vv' and 'zz' as you exhale. You should feel your abdominal muscles and diaphragm work as you release the breath. Good, upright posture should be maintained, with shoulders down and imagining your neck has increased in height.
- **Vowels:** Choose five notes, descending, using the whole range of vowels on each note: ee-eh-ah-o-oo. Start in the middle area of your voice for this exercise and breathe for each change of note. Then, using a pattern 1-3-5-3-1, develop each vowel over two

notes, imagining the vowels joining each other as smoothly as possible, without breaks. Start from middle C and ascend in semitones. By the time you reach A, tenors and sopranos should continue to ascend, while altos and basses should go down the octave.

- **Tongue, teeth and lips:** using an ascending scale, invent tongue-twisters, gradually increasing in speed. Here are two suggestions: i) 'Papa's got a head like a ping-pong ball'; ii) 'copper-bottomed coffee pot'. The tongue is a vital component in singing, as in speaking. It forms the vowels and consonants, and helps in placing the sound. It naturally moves around, but needs checking during singing. Returning to the vowels exercise earlier, the tongue should feel relaxed, with the tip just touching the bottom teeth. For the 'ee' vowel it will naturally move a little further back, but it should never lift so as to cause an obstruction for the sound to emerge with a natural resonance. A specific exercise for the tongue is to roll it around the mouth six times in each direction. It should then feel much more relaxed.
- **Humming:** using an 'n', hum through your entire register from low to high and back. Do that several times then use an 'ng' as in 'sing'. You will notice the 'ng' will allow your mouth to open slightly: check your tongue is in the correct place. This exercise is guaranteed to warm up your voice sufficiently prior to any rehearsal.
- **Brain gym:** start with middle C as number 1 and teach different patterns: 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, etc. 1-3, 5-3, 4-2, 1. There are endless possibilities. Just when everyone has 'got it', remove the sound with differing numbers: i.e. in 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, removing 3 means 1-2, 1-silence (3), 1-4, 1-5; or (descending) 5-4, 5-silence (3), 5-2, 5-1. Expand the idea to whole octaves and beyond.

It should all be fun and informative, and the body and mind should be ready to go. ■

*David Hill is music director of the Bach Choir and Leeds Philharmonic Society, principal conductor of Yale Schola Cantorum, and associate guest conductor of Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.*

▼ Warming up for a rehearsal should involve physical activity, as well as vocal exercises



HALFPOINT

Do you have any questions relating to choral direction and singing? Send them to David Hill via the editor: [maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com](mailto:maggie.hamilton@markallengroup.com)





There are many musical feathers in Nuremberg's hat. **Rebecca Tavener** traverses the Bavarian city, taking in world-renowned composers, organs in gothic churches and *bratwurst* by the river

**H**ear Nuremberg mentioned, and what music pops into your head? Probably Wagner and his romantic, simplistically beguiling reimagining of medieval Bavaria in the time of Meistersinger Hans Sachs. But this strategically and commercially important city, a seat of emperors, has nurtured cultural richness for centuries. On every corner of the historic centre – the Altstadt – there is a reminder: the many delightful fountains, for example, one of the largest and most

complicated of which is the Ehekarussell (Marriage-go-round) based on a bawdy poem by Hans Sachs about his own turbulent relationship. The Schöner Brunnen from the 1380s dominates the Hauptmarkt with its delicate spire and plethora of medieval figures and, while the Narrenschiff (Ship of Fools) bears a satirical message, the Tugendbrunnen is a renaissance representation of the virtues; and there are many more.

Nuremberg is a great place for pedestrians:

the tourist is continually amazed by the detailed reconstruction of a city 90 per cent destroyed by the end of the second world war: with many of the most important buildings, one can hardly detect the join between old and new. The extraordinary talents of medieval and renaissance artists such as Albrecht Dürer; sculptor Adam Kraft, whose masterpiece, a 61ft tall tabernacle, is a major attraction in the Lorenzkirche; and wood carver Veit Stoss, whose 'Annunciation' in the Lorenzkirche is a must-see – just two among many celebrated church artworks, rescued twice: first from the iconoclastic ravages of the Reformation, and then from Allied bombing raids, having been stored in deep cellars under the Imperial Castle.

Due to the city's many centuries of political significance and the prosperity of trade and church, superb musicians have been born in, trained in, and/or attracted to the city. Johann Pachelbel (b.1653 in Nuremberg) is the best-known today. But a couple of lesser-known names also reward exploration. Organist-composer Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612), a friend of Giovanni Gabrieli, was one of the first to bring the polychoral Venetian style to Nuremberg and Germany. He was also an instrument consultant, and became a mechanical expert, designing a clockwork organ which became the property of Emperor Rudolf II. In 1602 he became Kapellmeister of Nuremberg's town music. He wrote secular as well as sacred music – mostly for Catholic

▼ The medieval city of Nuremberg, with the Sebalduskirche (l) and the castle on the hill





liturgies, although he was a Protestant – and he crafted an almost ecumenical style, enabling his works to be denominationally indeterminate.

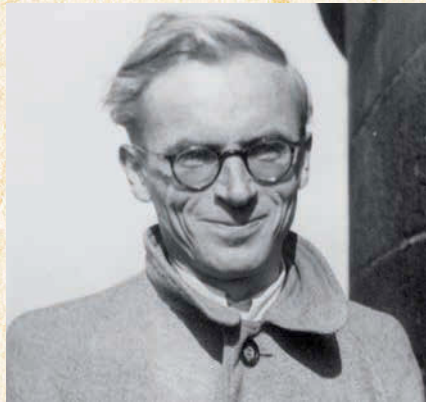
A more recent son of whom the city is justly proud is Hugo Distler (1908–42). Born in Nuremberg, he studied composition and organ at Leipzig Conservatory, becoming a valued teacher and original composer, particularly of choral works. His compositional style, though not atonal, could be adventurous, causing him to be denounced as ‘degenerate’ by Nazi critics. Obligated to join the National Socialist Party in order to work, he became increasingly depressed by the futility of trying to serve both God and the Nazis, and in 1942 he committed suicide at the age of 34. Today, Nuremberg musicians are keen to recommend his works to visiting choir directors, among them *Der Jahrkreis* (‘The Circle of the Liturgical Year’), *Die Weihnachtsgeschichte* (‘The Christmas Story’), and *Totentanz* (‘Danse macabre’), inspired by the famous fresco in Lübeck Cathedral, destroyed by bombs in 1942.

Anyone drawn to sacred music could not fail to be awestruck by the two great, cathedral-sized gothic churches which dominate the Altstadt. To the north, the Sebalduskirche stands proudly by the handsome Rathaus (where the bold of spirit can visit the old torture chambers). Full of medieval heraldic hatchments, there is much to admire, including the fabulous shrine of St Sebald. The church’s musical treasures,

## Today’s city is charming and benign, bearing its history with self-knowledge, humility and grace

however, include the four-manual, 84-stop organ by Willi Peter of Cologne (1975) including a stop which, when pulled, causes a wooden figure to stick its tongue out.

The southern side of the city boasts the Lorenzkirche in a beautiful pedestrianised piazza. One of the first major churches in Germany to become Lutheran, the city fathers refused the destruction of ‘popish’ art – they had paid for it, after all! There are three organs: a five-manual Steinmeyer (1937, rebuilt 2005), and two smaller instruments. The Frauenkirche in the Hauptmarkt has a stunning 16th-century



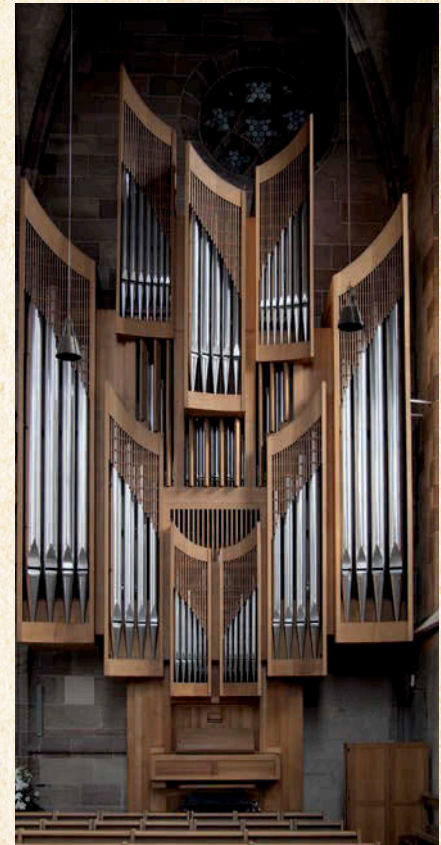
KARL SCHWENBERG



AARPS

▲ (anti-clockwise, from top) Troubled composer Hugo Distler; the 16th-century mechanical clock in the Hauptmarkt, with figures of prince-electors and the Holy Roman Emperor; the Frauenkirche’s Klais organ

mechanical clock in its façade. As it strikes the hour of noon, figures of the Holy Roman Emperor and the prince-electors emerge and parade below the face. There has been an organ here since 1442 and the present three-manual instrument was built in 1988 by Klais Orgelbau. These instruments and more



MARTIN DIERING

the river; stroll over the wooden Hangman’s Bridge; buy *lebkuchen*, tin figurines (fine metal work is the legacy of Nuremberg’s famous armoury industry) and wooden musical angels. Don’t forget the Christmas Market, one of the finest in Europe. People are welcoming – look lost and you’ll soon be offered directions (something Nuremberg has in common with its UK twin city, Glasgow).

Finally, we must acknowledge the elephant in the room: for those interested in the history of the Nazis and the second world war, the Documentation Centre and Nazi Party Rally Grounds are preserved so that none can forget. Nuremberg rose again from the rubble of war, and it is apt that the first concert after peace was established featured Haydn’s *The Creation*. Today’s city is a charming, bustling, benign place, looking both forward and back, bearing its history with self-knowledge, humility and grace. ■

*The city of Nuremberg in southern Germany is easily accessible by plane, train or car. tourismus.nuernberg.de*

are celebrated annually in the ION Musica Sacra Festival, which includes a competition for the Johann Pachelbel Prize. In 2020 it will take place from 26 June to 2 July and, besides daily organ recitals, there will be chamber music and choral concerts, including Bach, Monteverdi, plainchant, and contemporary music, all from leading interpreters.

More than one visit is needed to explore Nuremberg. Among the top attractions are the Deutsches Museum, the Imperial Castle, and the Albrecht Dürer House. For smaller pleasures, enjoy *bratwurst* and *weissbier* in the Heilig-Geist-Spital, partially built over





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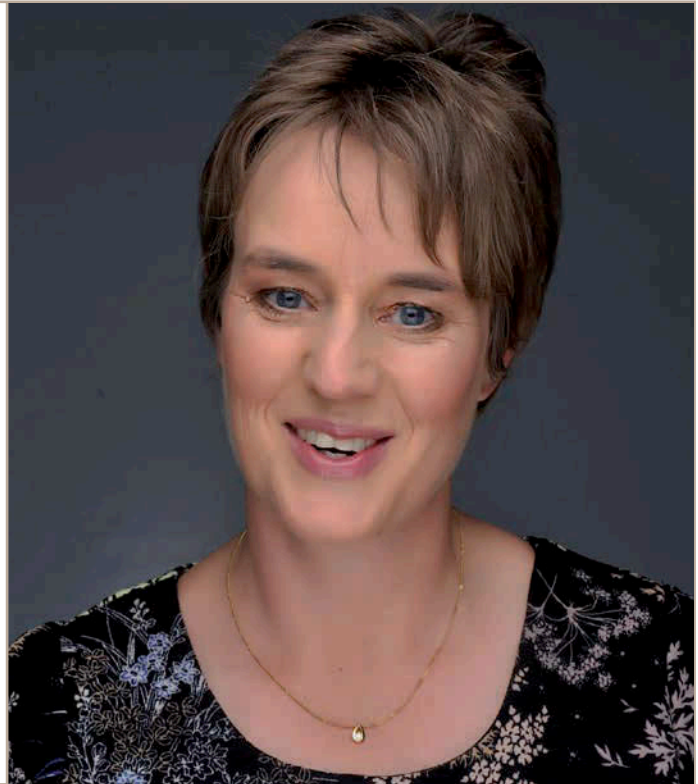
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# RECITAL ROUND-UP

## COLOURS OF SOUND

On 22 March Guildford Cathedral's organist and master of the choristers, Katherine Dienes-Williams, will take to the organ in Methodist Central Hall, London. She told *C&O*: 'The repertoire I have chosen includes works by Edward Elgar and Edward Bairstow – two 19th-/early 20th-century English composers who wrote symphonically for the organ and whose works will resound throughout the Central Hall.' On the choice of venue and the instrument, Dienes-Williams said, 'Central Hall's original organ was built by Hill & Son in 1912. It was rebuilt and enlarged by Rushworth and Dreaper in 1970. The 2010-11 reconstruction was by Harrison & Harrison and includes a complete renewal of the soundboards, action and wind system.' Her choice of repertoire will demonstrate the 'many different colours of sound the instrument has to offer.'

■ Also this month, two churches host the opening recitals on their respective organs. On 14 March, Paul Hale plays at St Mary's, Potters Bar in the opening recital on the transplanted Lewis/Walker organ. Hale told *C&O*, 'It sounds magnificent in the fine acoustics and looks equally splendid, with two open metal 16ft fronts. I will showcase the organ, endeavouring in a varied programme to demonstrate all its comprehensive tonal opportunities.' A week later, on 21 March, Hale plays the opening recital on the restored Harrison & Harrison organ at St Chad's, Ladybarn, Manchester. He said, 'Its colourful 24 stops – the third manual being a Solo – will be put through their paces, the *Plymouth Suite* by Percy Whitlock being the requested centrepiece of my programme.'



MARVIN TAYLOR

### Alton, St Lawrence at 8pm

Kristel Aer (3 Mar) 01420 543628

### Birmingham Town Hall at 1pm

Thomas Trotter (9 Mar) 0121 780 3333

### Brighton, The Meeting House, Univ. of Sussex at 7pm\*

D'Arcy Twinkwon (23 Mar), (12 noon, 25 Mar) 01273 678 217

### Burton-upon-Trent, St Mowden's at 12.30pm

David Butterworth (11 Mar)  
01332 552850

### Cheltenham College at 1.15pm

Matthew Martin (3 Mar) 01242 265600

### Chester Cathedral at 1.10pm

Andrew Wyatt (5 Mar), Richard Lea (12 Mar), Tony Pinel (19 Mar), Alexander Palotai (26 Mar)  
01244 500974

### Chichester Cathedral at 1.10pm

Claudia Grinnell (10 Mar) 01243 812 488

### Edgware, St Alphage, Burnt Oak at 7.30pm

Gordon Stewart (7 Mar) 020 8952 4611

### Edinburgh, Reid Concert Hall at 1.10pm

David Ponsford (27 Mar) 0131651 4336

### Glasgow, St John's Renfield at 2pm

James Lancelot (14 Mar) 0141 334 0782

### Gloucester Cathedral at 7.30pm

Christopher Herrick (4 Mar)  
01452 528095

### Godalming, SS Peter & Paul at 1pm

Jonathan Holl (6 Mar) 01483 414135

### Hereford Cathedral at 3.05pm

Peter Dyke (9 Mar) 01432 374200

### Leeds Town Hall at 1.05pm

Neil Taylor (2 Mar), Thomas Trotter (16 Mar), Simon Lindley (23 Mar), Darius Battiwalla (30 Mar) 0113 378 6600

### Leeds Symphony Hall at 1pm

Thomas Trotter (23 Mar) 0121 780 3333

### Liverpool, St George's Hall at 12.45pm

Ian Tracey (3 Mar) 0151 225 6909

### London E1, Christ Church Spitalfields at 7.30pm

Bine Bryndorf (23 Mar) 020 7377 2440

### London EC2, St Lawrence Jewry next Guildhall at 1pm

School series (3, 10, 17, 24, 31 Mar)  
020 7600 9478

### London EC3, St Michael's Cornhill at 1pm

Geoffrey Webber (2 Mar), Matthew Blaiden (9 Mar), Richard Moore (16 Mar), Wesley Warren (23 Mar), Benjamin Newlove (30 Mar)  
020 7283 3121

### London EC4, St Paul's Cathedral at 4.45pm

Peter Stevens (1 Mar), Helen Charlston, Simon Johnson (8 Mar), Jeremy Lloyd (15 Mar) 020 7651 0898

### London EC4, St Stephen's Walbrook at 12.30pm

Michael Nicholas (6 Mar) 020 7626 9000

### London EC4, Temple Church at 1.15pm

David Graham (4 Mar), Thomas Allery (11 Mar), Polina Sosnina (18 Mar), Roger Sayer (25 Mar) 020 7427 5650

### London SW1, Methodist Central Hall at 3pm

Katherine Dienes-Williams (22 Mar)  
020 7654 2000

### London W1, Grosvenor Chapel at 1.10pm

Peter Stevens (10 Mar), Timothy Wakerell (24 Mar) 075384 24370

### London W1, St George's, Hanover Square at 1.10pm

Freddie James (17 Mar), Callum Alger (31 Mar) 07538 424370

### London WC2, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church at 4pm

Peter King (28 Mar) 01953 688393

### London WC2, St-Martin-in-the-Fields at 1pm

Edward Dean (13 Mar) 020 7766 1100

### Manchester, St Chad's, Ladybarn at 7.30pm

Paul Hale (21 Mar) 07974 931057

### Norwich Cathedral at 1.10pm

Alexander Woodrow (5 Mar)  
01603 218306

### Oxford Town Hall at 12 noon

Tbc (18 Mar) 01865 252195

### Portsmouth Cathedral at 1.10pm

Rhidian Jones (26 Mar) 023 9282 3300

### Potters Bar, St Mary's at 7.30pm

Paul Hale (14 Mar) 07974 931057

### Reading Town Hall at 1pm

Jamie Andrews (16 Mar)  
0118 960 6060

### Rochdale Town Hall at 12 noon

Marc Murray (14 Mar) 01706 343163

### Shrewsbury Abbey at 12 noon

Thomas Trotter (7 Mar) 01743 232723

### St Albans Cathedral at 12.30pm

Mark Brafield (18 Mar) 01727 860780

### St Albans, St Saviour's at 5.30pm

Joseph Fort (21 Mar) 01727 844765

### Worcester Cathedral at 12.15pm

Jonathan Hope (5 Mar) 01905 732900

### Warwick, Collegiate Church of St Mary at 1.15pm

Oliver Hancock (6 Mar)  
01926 403940 (ext. 3)

### Wells Cathedral at 1.05pm

Greg Morris (12 Mar), James Gough (19 Mar) 01749 674483

For fuller listings, visit  
[www.choirandorgan.com](http://www.choirandorgan.com)

\* unless otherwise stated

While every effort is made to provide correct information, readers are strongly advised to telephone the numbers given to confirm details before attending.



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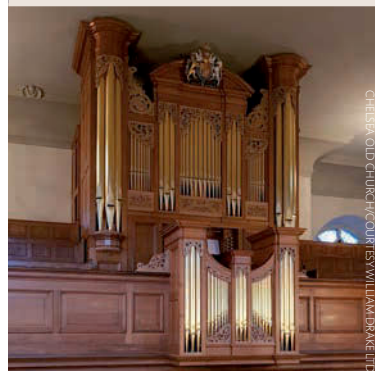
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# CHOIR & ORGAN NEXT ISSUE

APRIL 2020

## SALAD DAYS

A special focus on children and youth, including the Hallé's outreach programmes, cambiata voices, and teaching young children to sing.

## CHELSEA SEASON

The new William Drake organ has just been inaugurated in Chelsea Old Church.

## NED ROREM

An overview of the choral canon of the US composer and Pulitzer Prize winner.

## GRAY & DAVISON

Nicholas Thistlethwaite surveys the output of the London-based organ builders during their heyday.

## LONDON PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Behind the scenes of the LPO's choral partners.

## Plus...

News and previews, reviews, readers' offers, and a supplement of children's and youth choirs, and music written for them.





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## NEW DISCS COMING OUT IN... MARCH 2020



BEAU IMAGES AND PHOTOGRAPHY

▲ The Bach Choir releases the culmination of its outreach project, featuring Will Todd's new commission

It is not often that one comes across a choral CD with 'noodles' in the title. Yet this month sees the Bach Choir under David Hill celebrate the culmination of its outreach project with local schools in the form of a new commission by Will Todd, entitled **Lights, Stories, Noise, Dreams, Love and Noodles** [Signum Classics SIGCD 591]. When the title of this piece is arranged on the CD cover, the letters align to spell 'London'. Michael Rosen, the children's poet-author

who wrote the text, describes the 25-minute cantata as 'echoes, memories, pictures and sounds of a city: and the words and music that spring from it all'. The piece is for choir, youth choir and jazz ensemble, and is joined on the disc by Todd's setting of Shakespeare and several other works for choir.

Collaborating with schools is also one of Voce New England's *raison d'être*, having been initially conceptualised to give and educate to 'further develop the next

generation of choral artists'. On **Blessing: The Music of Paul Mealor** [Signum Classics SIGCD 613], the choir, under the artistic direction of Mark Singleton, endeavours to 'serve harmony' through Mealor's settings of traditional Biblical texts, a Greek prayer and a Christina Rossetti poem, among others.

In Munich, Peter Kofler performs on the 75-stop Rieger organ of the Jesuit church St Michael to release **Organ Works: Opus Bach** [FARAO classics B 108110]. Kofler launched his J.S. Bach project in 2017, choosing a 'modern' instrument to reflect Bach's contribution to new developments, such as the tempered tuning system, the virtuoso use of the organ pedal or the development of the fortepiano.

Meanwhile, C&O's New Music partners for 2020 – Clare College, Cambridge – release **Stabat Mater** [Harmonia mundi HMM 905323] at the end of the month, featuring works by Arvo Pärt, James MacMillan and Pēteris Vasks. In Edinburgh, Simon Niemiński presents **Giles Swayne: Stations of the Cross** [Resonus RES 10118] on the Copley organ of St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral. This 14-movement solo work was composed between 2004 and 2005 and is one hour in length, making it one of the most substantial organ works to have been commissioned in recent times. ■

**CHORAL CDS**

**Arvo Pärt, James MacMillan, Pēteris Vasks: Stabat Mater**  
Choir of Clare College/Ross  
Harmonia mundi HMM 905323

**Blessing: The Choral Music of Paul Mealor**  
Voce New England/Singleton  
Signum SIGCD 613

**James Whitbourn: The Seven Heavens**  
Cor Cantiamo/Johnson  
Divine Art DDA 25192

**Jēkabs Jančevskis: Aeternum & other choral works**  
Riga Cathedral School Mixed Choir/  
Cābulis  
Hyperion CDA 68328

**Will Todd: Lights, Stories, Noise, Dreams & Noodles**  
Bach Choir/Todd  
Signum SIGCD 591

**Parry: Judith**

Crouch End Festival Chorus, London  
Mozart Players/Vann  
Chandos CHSA 5268(2)

**Rejoice! Honoring the Jewish Spirit**

Essential Voices USA, Daniel Miller  
& Raman Ramakrishnan (vc), James  
Cunningham (pno)/Clurman  
Acis APL 97092

**Seren**

Cai Thomas (boy treble)  
Rubicon RCD 1060

**Singing in Secret: Clandestine Catholic Music by William Byrd**  
Marian Consort/McCleery  
Delphian DCD 34230

**The Library vol.1**

King's Singers  
Signum SIGCD 601

**Truth and Fable**

The Thirteen/Robertson  
Acis APL 95579

**ORGAN CDS****Giles Swayne: Stations of the Cross**

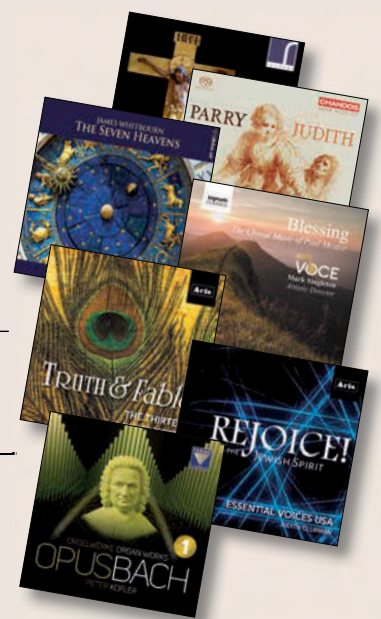
Simon Niemiński, Copley  
organ, St Mary's Metropolitan  
Cathedral, Edinburgh  
Resonus RES 10118

**Organ Works: Opus Bach**

Peter Kofler, Rieger organ, Jesuit  
church St Michael, Munich  
FARAO classics B 108110

**The Chicago Recital**

Isabelle Demers, E.M. Skinner  
organ Opus 634 (1928),  
Rockefeller Memorial Chapel,  
University of Chicago  
Acis APL 41752





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# REVIEWS

Rating: ★★★★★ Highly recommended ★★★★★ Very good ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Poor



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## KEYBOARD CDS

**Dandrieu: Magnificats**

Jean-Baptiste Robin, Cliquot/Tribout organ (1710), Chapelle Royale, Versailles  
Château de Versailles, Collection L'âge d'or de l'orgue français no.2 [70:51]

★★★★



This much-rebuilt organ sounds splendid, thanks to the restorers

Jean-Loup Boisseau and Bertrand Cattiaux. Volume 1 of a projected two-volume set, the disc comprises Dandrieu's original organ music rather than his organ transcriptions. Jean-Baptiste Robin is right to stress the Italian style in the music, informing his application (or not) of *inégalité* that, when used, always enhances the melodic lines. The programme consists of four Magnificat suites (without plainchant), three Noël's, the *Offertoire 'O filii et filiae'*, two fugues, a *Tierce en taille*, *Muzète* and the *Carillon*. Despite some over-long final cadences, the playing is musical, restrained and stylistic.

DAVID PONSFORD

**Opus Bach**

Peter Kofler, Rieger organ (2011), Jesuit Church of St Michael, Munich  
Farao Classics B 108110 (5 CDs) [69:11; 67:58; 76:07; 71:20; 73:47]

★★★



Stated as volume 1, this is, presumably, the first in a long-range project to record most extant organ works by J.S. Bach. Peter Kofler justifies his choice of a large modern Rieger organ ('suitable for ... baroque to German romanticism and

French symphonic organ music, right through to the musical present') by arguing that Bach was always interested in modern instruments and their development. Each of the five CDs is arranged as a recital, consisting of preludes and fugues, chorale preludes and partitas, the Vivaldi arrangements and miscellaneous works in what Kofler calls 'conclusive dramaturgy'. CD 1 is based on Mendelssohn's Leipzig Bach recital in 1840 (but with *Sei gegrüßet* replacing the Passacaglia BWV 582), and CD 2 is centred on Advent and Christmas. The liner notes focus on Kofler's individual approach to recording Bach and the recording technology, although one does not learn anything about the music itself. The recording is ambient, although not lacking in clarity in this building, with something approaching eight seconds of reverberation. However, Kofler's tempi are fast in the preludes and fugues, and his approach is rather metronomic. This works well in the Vivaldi Concerto Allegros and those pieces in which this approach serves the music, but there is a certain lack of expressivity in, for example, *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* (BWV 659), where a slow 8-beats per bar inhibits the expressive melody. Sometimes, the fast-metronomic *plenum*-throughout approach, as in the Prelude & Fugue in E minor (BWV 548), results in some confusion in the Fugue, particularly at section changes. Even the very first bar of the prelude feels unsettled – rhythm and metre are not the same thing. Technically, the playing is of a very high level, like a very well-oiled, high-powered BMW;

but it is lacking a certain flexibility, expressivity and communication.

DAVID PONSFORD

**Prairie Sounds**

Maxine Thévenot, Casavant organ (1930), Holy Rosary Cathedral, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada  
Raven OAR-162 [56:09]

★★★★



Stepping beyond the slightly misleading title, Maxine Thévenot

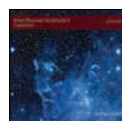
delivers an enjoyable recital of French (classical and romantic) repertoire combined with some attractive and inventive works by contemporary Canadian composers. British composers are also represented, with the Bridge *Adagio* and Philip Moore's *Laudate Dominum*, but the main works are César Franck's *Pièce héroïque* and *Prélude, Fugue et Variation*. All this repertoire is rendered elegantly by the vintage Casavant organ – a fine 57-rank instrument dating back to 1930 and renovated in 1993. Complete with comprehensive sleeve notes, Thévenot provides a worthy showcase for this notable Canadian instrument – if a little on the short side for a CD.

RUPERT GOUGH

**Bruckner: Symphony no.5**

Matthias Giesen, Bruckner organ, St Florian Monastery, Upper Austria  
Gramola 99169 [84:40]

★★★★



Heard on the well-equipped IV/103, 7,343-pipe 'Bruckner organ'

of St Florian's Monastery in Upper Austria – beneath which the former choirboy and organist-composer is buried –

Matthias Giesen's transcription of the enigmatic, contrapuntally rich Fifth Symphony rings true with all the elusive mystery and majesty of a work Bruckner himself ambiguously dubbed 'fantastic'. Giesen's familiarity with the mighty instrument – having held positions at the monastery from 1999 to 2017 – pays considerable dividends. A well-proportioned, adroitly detailed arrangement is delivered with a controlled (if occasionally overly manicured) subtlety that moves towards the delayed resounding climax with steady precision and a satisfyingly dark-hued sense of poetry.

MICHAEL QUINN

**Charles-Marie Widor: Organ Symphonies vol.1**

Wolfgang Rübsam, E.M. Skinner organ, Rockefeller Memorial Chapel, University of Chicago  
Naxos 8.574262 [84:01]

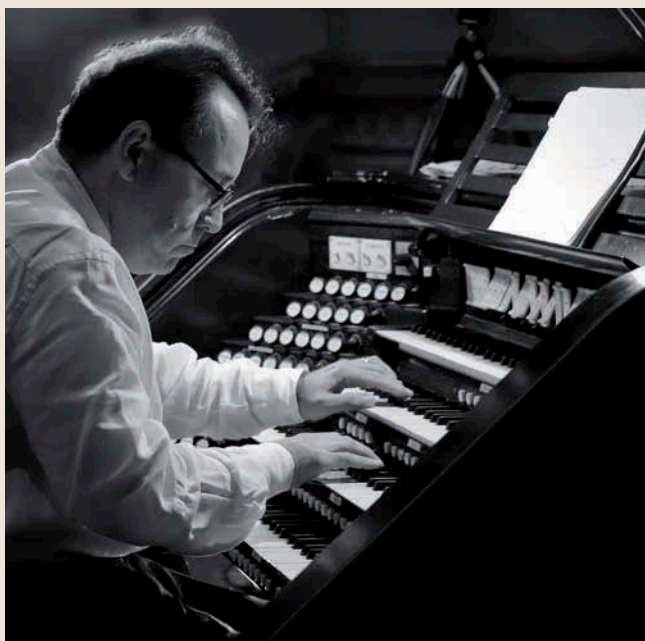
★★★



There is no shortage of recent recordings of the Widor

Symphonies, many featuring historic Cavaillé-Coll instruments. Wolfgang Rübsam's new survey takes the view that Widor himself performed his symphonies in recitals all over Europe on instruments of very different provenance; so, for this first volume, we have the E.M. Skinner organ at Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. The first two symphonies sound very fine, with noble singing-tone from the foundations and clear, assertive reeds. However, I find Rübsam's rubato somewhat wayward and passage-work over-articulated which, for me, renders the music less symphonic. This is particularly

AMIRELETR



### Mahler Orchestral Songs – The Organ Transcriptions

David Briggs, Eule organ, Konstantin-Basilika, Trier; David John Pike (bar)  
Analekta AN 2 9180 [68:52]

★★★★★



David Briggs has already proved himself the master of translating Mahler's orchestral scores into mighty organ works. Joined by the wonderful young baritone David John Pike, Briggs provides fantastically evocative and colourful accompaniments to three song cycles: *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, *Kindertotenlieder* and *Rückert-Lieder*. The large, new Eule organ in the Konstantin-Basilika equips Briggs with an extensive and expressive palette, and the sound magically envelops the voice aided by the acoustics which, as Briggs himself concludes, add 'a unique and thrilling dimension'. Pike's rich sound is complemented by a compelling emotional connection with the poet's anguish. This is a tremendously captivating album and I recommend it highly.

RUPERT GOUGH

◀ 'Evocative and colourful accompaniments': David Briggs

evident in an incredibly ponderous *Marche pontificale*. The Second Symphony fares better but excludes the original Scherzo movement, perhaps because the slower tempi already take this disc well over 80 minutes.

RUPERT GOUGH

### Klangreden: Lutheran chorale-based works for organ

Callum Alger, Garnier organ (2014), University of Birmingham; Walker organ (1990), St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham  
Regent REGDCD 548 [65:41]

★★★★



It can no longer go unnoticed that the busy organ department at the Birmingham Royal Conservatoire is producing a steady stream of gifted players under the vision and leadership of Henry Fairs, and now Daniel Moulst. Callum Alger, a Fairs pupil, is the second to produce a

debut solo CD in recent times while still *in statu pupillari*. Given the largely mainstream and oft-recorded nature of the repertoire heard here, this was a brave undertaking for Alger and for Regent alike. Compliments to both, then: while Alger's identity as a performer will undoubtedly develop, his music-making here is unfailingly elegant. Bruhns's *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* fantasia betrays fastidious attention to detail, Bach's *Herr Jesu Christ* trio is poised and attractive, and the *accelerando* in Mendelssohn's third sonata is nicely judged. The Garnier organ charms in solo and smaller combinations, aided by the exceptional acoustics, less so in the plenum. Meanwhile, at St Chad's, Alger performs a real rarity, a vigorously wrought sonata on *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* by Carl Reinecke. He concludes with Reger's *Halleluja! Gott zu loben* fantasia, a real *tour de force* slightly limited by the (otherwise quite

cultured) Walker's slight lack of dynamic extremes (especially soft variety at 8ft pitch) and reliance on reeds for larger effects, unlike the instruments Reger had in mind. Alger's is a name to watch out for.

CHRIS BRAGG

### François Couperin: Mass for the Parishes; Mass for the Convents

Aude Heurtematte, Clicquot organ (1769), Saint-Gervais, Paris

Raven OAR-153 (2 CDs)  
[52:26; 43:29]

★★★★



It is always enticing to hear music recorded on a composer's own instrument, but this F.H. Clicquot organ has undergone vicissitudes, and the equal temperament tuning compromises its original character. Originally released in 2009, Aude Heurtematte's playing is faithful to the 1989 L'oiseau-lyre edition, but there is

scope for added ornamentation, ornaments being sparse in the MSS compared to the fully published *livres* by Couperin's contemporaries. More awareness of Italian influences is needed; 'blanket' *inégalité* in fast triple-time Italian movements with continuous quavers is wearing, and in places where *inégalité* is appropriate, some short-long rhythms (as well as long-short) would be effective.

DAVID PONSFORD

### Pax Britannica: Organ Music by Victorian and Edwardian Composers

Robert James Stove, Kenneth Jones organ, Trinity College Chapel, Melbourne  
Ars Organi AOR 002 [58:43]

★★★★



Here is a potpourri of height-of-empire pieces, some familiar (Parry's A flat *Elegy*, Stanford's op.101 no.6 *Andante con moto*), others forgotten, eight of which

▶



**Canadian Organ Music**

Rachel Mahon, Harrison & Harrison organ (1962),  
Coventry Cathedral  
Delphian DCD 34234 [61:03]

★★★★★



This is a spectacular debut solo album by Canadian Rachel Mahon, now assistant director of music at Coventry Cathedral. Mahon plays with presence and muscularity to match her fireproof virtuosity, and her time as organ scholar at St Paul's Cathedral seems to have given her an intuitive sense of how to use large acoustics to dramatic ends. The music is all interesting – Healey Willan's *Introduction*, *Passacaglia* & *Fugue* is a

warhorse of course, but given a stellar performance, while Gerald Bales's attractive *Petite suite* breathes the same modally tinged air as the music of Flor Peeters. Having been composed as recently as 2008 in a firmly post-Vierne harmonic idiom, it would be easy to write off Rachel Laurin's First Symphony as mere pastiche. However, the thematic material, tightly controlled structure and volcanic drama comprehensively banish the epithet; this is a very fine work indeed. The repertoire well suits the Coventry organ (largely paid for by Canadian donations), and the recorded sound is both exciting and atmospheric. Tremendous stuff.

CHRIS BRAGG

▼ Coventry Cathedral's organ, largely paid for by Canadian donations



COURTESY FUGUE STATE FILMS

◀ make first appearances on disc here. Robert James Stove's judicious playing provides greater nuance than some might allow for repertoire caught between heart-on-sleeve Victorian sentimentality and stiff Edwardian solemnity. Of the first recordings, Alexander Mackenzie's *Burial* (op.27 no.3), with its striking Berlioz and Liszt accents, and Sterndale Bennett's hymn-like *Voluntary in E flat* are grave and moving, while Alfred Rawlings's *Allegro con spirito* frames a dramatic dialogue between the Great and Swell manuals with Schumann-esque lightness of touch. An intriguing programme, if not altogether satisfying.

MICHAEL QUINN

**Louis Vierne: Complete Organ Symphonies vol.3**

Stephen Tharp, Cavaillé-Coll organ (1862), Saint-Sulpice, Paris

Aeolus AE 11191 [SACD hybrid  
86:06; audio CDs 45:55, 40:07]

★★★★★



This release has a slightly curious genesis in that the first two volumes

in Aeolus's complete Vierne symphony cycle were recorded fully a decade ago by Daniel Roth at St Sulpice. If the story is to be believed, Roth is less fond of the last two of Vierne's symphonies, however, and the cycle has now been completed by the American Stephen Tharp. Tharp is quite rightly recognised as one of the great organists of our time, and his mastery of this most challenging of organs is mightily impressive. With new Vierne discs, especially on the great Cavaillé-Colls (a point of discussion in itself; many feel Vierne's music was largely inspired by the

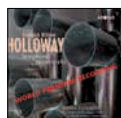
organs he encountered elsewhere), my personal point of reference remains Ben van Oosten's peerless performances for MDG. Some limited comparison is interesting, if only for illustrative purposes: while Van Oosten's Vierendeel looks melancholically over your shoulder, Tharp's looks you straight in the eye and compels you to stare back. It is not quick (indeed, the *Larghetto* from the Fifth is really very slow), but it is driven and brilliant. If the scherzos seem more humorous than ghoulishly tortured, the fiendish finale to the Sixth is hair-raisingly magnificent, with some telling rubato holding the horses back at just the right moments. The sound of the awe-inspiring Cavaillé-Coll seems, to my ears, slightly over-engineered: I want to hear the organ above me, as in the church, but instead I hear it in front of me with, at close quarters, Clicquot's Cymbale cascading against the vault from its position high in the Récit. It is no more than a question of taste; Aeolus's production values, photography and booklet are as exceptional as ever, and Tharp's performances make this very highly recommendable.

CHRIS BRAGG

### Frederick William Holloway: Symphonic organ works

Markus Eichenlaub, Nelson (1904) / Krawinkel (2009) organ, St Bartholomäus, Gackebach Aeolus AE 11181 [79:11]

★★★★



Frederick William Holloway is an unknown but somewhat

interesting figure in late 19th- and early 20th-century British

organ history as long-time organist of the Crystal Palace, following its relocation to Sydenham. In fact, he was directing a choir rehearsal there when the last great fire broke out in 1936. His music is clearly for the secular arena and is perhaps most reminiscent of Lemare in style. The present release, made up largely of first recordings, includes an Organ Symphony in C minor, a Concert Toccata and a vigorous Introduction & Allegro concertante, as well as plenty of pretty 'tea-shop' melodies. The latter show off the elegant solo stops of the Gackebach organ well, but I am not entirely comfortable with the choice of instrument, despite the generous acoustics. What began as a transplant of a 13-stop Nelson organ from Co. Durham has been expanded to four manuals and 43 stops with an illogical stoplist (the Great has three opens but no mixture, the Solo a mixture but no other vestige of a principal chorus; the Great has an oboe, the Swell none but does have two trumpets). Even if the remaining pipework is reputedly of English origin, in larger registrations the sound tends to become slightly gritty and unblended and there are some moments when the chorus reeds seem to struggle. The organ's footprint has not grown at all; where are all the extra reservoirs? Surely the second-hand pipework had been voiced for a variety of pressures? One seeks in vain for answers to any detailed questions online. Markus Eichenlaub plays with the virtuosity and panache of a leading English town hall organist and deserves enormous credit for pouring so much energy and serious intent into this forgotten English music.

CHRIS BRAGG

### CHORAL CDS

#### Hugh Benham: Sacred Choral Music

Convivium Singers, Malcolm Archer (org) / Alexander Norman (dir)

Convivium Records CR 050 [75:00]

★★★★



Hymns, a Mass setting, an evening service, motets and anthems and

some short organ pieces are included in this showcase for the sacred music of Hugh Benham, well-served by a small professional choir, organist Malcolm Archer and the lovely acoustics of St Alban the Martyr, Birmingham. As one would expect from a distinguished musicologist who has written on Tudor church music, harmony and counterpoint, the music is beautifully crafted, with particularly strong echoes of Bairstow, Francis Jackson, Howells and Poulenc. A setting of 'Ubi caritas' in both English and Latin was the highlight for me, but all the works on the disc deserve to be discovered by parish choirs or choral societies.

CLARE STEVENS

#### Richard Blackford: Pietà

Jennifer Johnston (s), Stephen Gadd (bar), Amy Dickson (sax), Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Chorus and Youth Chorus / Gavin Carr (dir)

Nimbus Alliance NI 6396 [47:30]

★★★★



In thinking about his setting of the *Stabat mater*, a joint commission

by Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and St Albans Choral Society, Richard Blackford was inspired by the raging grief expressed by Anna Akhmatova

when first her husband and then her son were arrested by Stalin's KGB. Blackford inserted poems from Akhmatova's *Requiem* between some of the liturgical movements as a counterpoint to what he saw as the more resigned suffering of Mary the Mother of Christ, and entitled the resulting short cantata 'Pietà'. Blackford's compositional style is conventional but his skilful treatment of the familiar text is inventive and moving, particularly in its use of children's chorus and solo saxophone. The adult chorus could do with a bit more heft, but the soloists and orchestra are excellent, and the recording is a valuable showcase for a work that deserves to enter the repertoire.

CLARE STEVENS

#### Cantate Domino: Works by Bach, Mozart, Telemann, Buxtehude & Handel

Ensemble BachWerkVokal / Gordon Safari (dir)

Musikproduktion Dabringhaus und Grimm MDG 9022138-6 [65:40]

★★★★★



There are some intriguing novelties on this fine debut

recording by BachWerkVokal, which brings together (unnamed) musicians from all over Europe as a concert ensemble under the direction of Salzburg-based Gordon Safari. He has completed Bach's Cantata BWV 190 *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* by reconstructing its first two movements; recorded Telemann's cantata of the same name TVWV 1:134 for the first time; and come up with two new solutions to Mozart's 'puzzle' canon 'Cantate Domino omnis' ▶





  
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◀ terra' from K73r. This is hardcore historically informed performance in which every musical line is full of character, and every piece approached as though it were indeed 'a new song'.

CLARE STEVENS

### Berühmte Opernchöre (Verdi, Wagner, Puccini, et al)

Choir of Bavarian Radio, Munich  
Radio Orchestra / Ivan Repušić (dir)

BR Klassik 900329 [79:55]

★★★★



A 1960s *Punch* cartoon showed a solemn youth leafing through a record shop browser marked 'Opera Highlights', while his neighbour pondered the choices offered by 'Opera Draggy Bits'. The Bavarian choir has managed to pull off both, with an overlong and at times slightly overcooked sampling of favourite choruses. The Wagner – from *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser* and *Der fliegende Holländer* – are done supremely well, the Puccini and Mascagni not so, though Leoncavallo's 'Andiam! Andiam!' from *Pagliacci* is handled with charm and great musicality. It is all just a bit much, but probably fine if played a few tracks at a time or downloaded to a personal playlist.

BRIAN MORTON

### Earthly and Divine

Chamber Choir of The Leys,  
Cambridge / Max Kenworthy (dir)

Priory PRCD 1231 [50:23]

★★★★



It is very satisfying when new generations of singers encounter and fall in love with the classics

of the choral repertoire; and it is evident that Max Kenworthy has enabled his students at The Leys school to do just that. There are many moments of shimmering beauty in their programme, sometimes enhanced by the fragile quality of the teenage voices, as in mesmerising performances of Stanford's *The Blue Bird* and Charles Wood's *Oculi omnium*. The range of dynamic contrast from such a small choir (ten students and two adult staff members) is extraordinary, as is the depth of expression in works such as Walton's *Set me as a seal* and Parry's *My soul, there is a country*. A cornucopia of old favourites is spiced with one or two less familiar pieces, including lovely settings of *The birds* by Richard Shephard, and *I wandered lonely as a cloud* by Rebecca Dale; the latter was premiered by the choir in 2019.

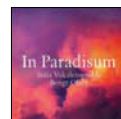
CLARE STEVENS

### In Paradisum

Sara Nyberg, Lisa Alf, Marie Hagenfeldt, Susan Radif (s), Ida Söderqvist (a), Tomas Ickzonas, Viktor Olsson (t), Jakob Lundvall (b), Sofia Vokalensemble / Bengt Ollén (dir)

Footprint FR 1112 [69:31]

★★★★



Swedish choirs tend to favour a warm, almost folksy vocal

sound, and Bengt Ollén insists on it, which means that these sacred works by various hands – Sven-David Sandström on the title piece, Matthew Peterson, James MacMillan, Alfred Schnittke among them – might be sung by a devout congregation rather than a professional choir. The Hölö church acoustics help. So richly talented is this group that almost ▶



REBECCA REID

▲ The King's Singers unite in a common cause

### The King's Singers: The Library vol.1

The King's Singers

Signum SIGCD 601 [23:46]

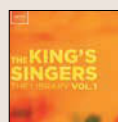
★★★★

### Finding Harmony

The King's Singers

Signum SIGD 607 [69:40]

★★★★



After their 50th anniversary year in 2018, marked by the lavish representative album *Gold*, The King's Singers (TKS) began 2019 with a new

counter-tenor and baritone – Edward Button and Nick Ashby. Inaugural releases from the new line-up include the first in a proposed series of EPs celebrating the lighter side of their repertoire. There are just seven tracks on **The Library: vol.1** – three existing arrangements and four new songs, including *The Ballad of Nornagest*, a folksong from the Faroe Islands, arranged by Kevin Brunt after the group's first visit to the Faroes.

**Finding Harmony** is a larger and more eclectic collection of songs that have 'either brought communities together under a common cause or helped to give identity to people whose culture or language has been threatened.' The inspiring theme allows TKS to include Luther's *Ein feste Burg* as a symbol of the Protestant reformation, and Byrd's *Ne iscaris, Domine* to represent the recusant Catholic community of Elizabethan England. The Scottish Highland clearances, the polyphonic tradition of Georgia, the Holocaust, Estonia's anti-communist 'Singing Revolution' of the 1980s, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and, coming up to date, the terrorist attack on the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester are among many other references. The stand-out track for me is the haunting *Strange fruit*, inspired by a racist lynching in America and made famous by Billie Holiday, in an arrangement by Stacey V. Gibbs. Effective arrangements of a very wide range of repertoire are delivered in TKS's usual polished style.

CLARE STEVENS



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◀ anyone would make an effective soloist and those duties are very democratically handled. Even the three 'spiritual songs' by Schnittke, which can sound a little dry and almost metallic, are handled with attractive plainness, and MacMillan's *Miserere* tops them perfectly, its text from the Book of Common Prayer delivered with appropriate simplicity.

BRIAN MORTON

### Meister der Dresdner Kirchenmusik (Homilius, Heinichen, Paër, J.S. Bach, Ristori, Schütz, Zelenka, Hasse)

Various

Carus 83.044 (10 CDs) [52:39; 66:51; 65:52; 73:10; 50:38; 44:34; 65:04; 70:15; 73:23; 61:27]

★★★★★



Carus Verlag has drawn on its substantial back catalogue of rare

repertoire connected with the Dresden Court and repackaged it in a bumper 10-CD boxed set, together with an informative booklet of liner notes on the music and the sung texts (although there are no English translations). The recordings date mainly from the 2000s and are all in high quality, digital sound, using Dresden-based choirs and instrumental ensembles, many under the sure direction of Hans-Christoph Rademann. The collection encompasses a wide-ranging spectrum of church music from the 17th to early 19th centuries, based around composers working for the Dresden court in Saxony, and presented across the CDs in approximately chronological order.

The survey starts with Schütz, the most important German composer of the 17th century,

and here represented by his *Symphoniae Sacrae III*, whose sonorous, opulent textures suggest that this collection was regarded by its composer as the summation of all that he had achieved by 1650. Rademann's expertise in this repertoire is widely acknowledged, not least in the pages of *C&O*, and he proves himself an ever-reliable guide.

Rademann is equally at home in the music of Zelenka,

one of the later figures who benefited from the flowering of the arts in Dresden, which gave it a widespread and important reputation as a centre with a princely court to rival Versailles. Zelenka's *Te Deum* for double chorus receives an excellent reading of a work too little known, as do Rademann's accounts of three Masses by Johann David Heinichen (nos. 9, 11 and 12). Heinichen was one of

the most important composers working at the Dresden court in the first half of the 18th century, whose 'number' Masses clearly prefigure those by Hummel and Haydn in their inventive orchestration and richly varied movements. While never achieving the levels of inspiration of Haydn, they are nevertheless fascinating 'lesser' works and receive glorious performances in live recordings ▶



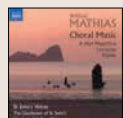
▲ Championing Mathias: St John's Voices

### William Mathias: Choral Music

St John's Voices, The Gentlemen of St John's / Graham Walker (dir)

Naxos 8.574162 [71:52]

★★★★★



William Mathias, like his compatriot Alun Hoddinott and their contemporary Nicholas Maw, needs his music to be championed on recordings to keep it alive and before the public. Most choral singers know Mathias's secular carol *Sir Christêmas*, but how many of them would be familiar with any of the pieces on this excellent CD from choirs linked to St John's College, Cambridge? Yet *A Babe is Born*, which kick-starts this programme, is every bit as joyful and rhythmically slick. And the delightful *Learsongs* show Mathias's sense of humour, while the *Ave verum corpus*, one of his final compositions, is a superbly crafted miniature which ought to be better known. The whole programme is thoughtfully chosen, superbly executed, beautifully recorded – and, best of all, hugely enjoyable.

PHILIP REED



## EARLY MUSIC



## Rebecca Tavener rounds up the latest releases

Anyone who thinks that the words 'marmite' and 'Monteverdi' should not exist in the same sentence, look away now. Baroque 'n' roll or baroque-y horror, **Monteverdi**

**Vespro** [Alpha Classics 552, 2CDs] finds vocal and instrumental ensemble La Tempête living up to its name. Thrillingly exciting and dramatic, with folksy bits and some positively off-the-wall ideas, Simon-Pierre Bestion describes his arrangements, additions and interpolations as 'a great musical voyage in the form of an office – rethought, reimagined, and not intended to be scrupulously historical'. His avowed intent to look back through the veil of 19th- and 20th-century views of performance practice is laudable, and he has his choir and brilliant soloists in what may be an 'authentic' balance. The antiphons are sung with byzantine *portamento* and ornamentation (the assistance of Marcel Pérès is fulsomely acknowledged) and this liturgical reconstruction is one of the longest on record (142:07) with loads of extras, some more welcome than others. There's even a serpent in paradise, joining the brass and adding a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Does it entertain? No doubt. Will it shock traditionalists? Surely, but it may also provoke helpful debate.

▼ 'Deliciously nimble, bright and "dance-y"': laBarocca



There are no disputed flavours in **Jan Dismas Zelenka: Missa Omnium Sanctorum** [Glossa GCD 924103], and Ruben Jais directs laBarocca with a light hand on the seasoning. Glorious soloists, all impressively graceful and proficient, include the fruity counter-tenor of Filippo Mineccia. It's deliciously nimble, bright, and 'dance-y', with detailed responsiveness from the choir, and every nuance of Zelenka's counterpoint expressed with vim. Founded in 2008 from the Fondazione Orchestra Sinfonica e Coro Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, laBarocca is rapidly becoming one of Italy's premiere baroque ensembles. The fine acoustics of the Auditorium di Milano add just enough bloom.

Delicate nuance adorns **Einsamkeit, O stilles Wesen – German Cantatas of the Baroque** [Christophorus CHR 77437] as the eight singers and bijou band of L'arpa festante, directed by Christoph Hesse, anthologise works by Jacobi, Heinichen, Kuhnau, Thaur, and J.S. Bach. Here are some revelations, with

## It is a riveting listen and one might want a lie-down in a darkened room afterwards

the rare and the rich brought together, all profound explorations of their pietistic texts. These chamber interpretations evoke the atmosphere of Lutheran devotions – most expressive, introspective and self-examining, penitential and humble, comforting and edifying – in weightlessly, effortlessly spiritual performances.

Lully could hardly be more different: purveyor of the musical expression of hubris. A rottweiler chorus brings sheer, biting terror to the *Dies irae* opening a tremendous disc from the Chœur de Chambre de Namur, who prance with unbounded *élan* through **Lully** [Alpha-Classics 444], in collaboration with the Château de Versailles, where it was recorded. Lully's *De profundis* and the celebrated *Te Deum* also feature in high-voltage performances, radiating might, glory and power from an earthly throne. It is a riveting listen and one might want a lie-down in a darkened room afterwards. Another Versailles production, the DVD **Lully Te Deum** [Château de Versailles CVS 012], also featuring Biber's behemoth, the multi-voice *Missa Salisburgensis*, filmed live in the Basilica di San Giovanni Laterano in Rome, might be expected to deliver a knock-out punch but, in spite of larger forces and the lavish setting and production values, it impresses without total conquest. Nevertheless, the Pages du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles (the chateau's own child performers) combine with the adult voices and the instruments of Collegium 1714 in 90 minutes of sonic and visual exaltation.

*Rebecca Tavener is a singer and director specialising in early and contemporary music. She is founder-director of Canty, Scotland's only professional medieval music group.*

◀ which capture the atmosphere of Dresden's Lukaskirche.

One might be surprised to find Bach's B minor Mass included in the set, until we recall that it was not composed as a unified work and that at least three sections of it were available as separate pieces before Bach used them to complete his 'Great Catholic Mass' in 1748/9. Bach presented the Dresden court with a set of parts in 1733 of the Kyrie and Gloria, which is what Rademann offers us here using small forces (the Gächinger Kantorei and the excellent Freiburger Barockorchester, with Carolyn Sampson no less as the brilliant soprano soloist).

The set also includes a Christmas Mass, under the direction of Peter Kopp, by the Italian-born Giovanni Alberto Ristori, which incorporates in the final movement the traditional pastoral siciliano lilt of the shepherds; four major works by Johann Adolf Hasse, including two Requiems (in E flat and C); German cantatas by Gottfried August Homilius, which, if nothing else, throw into sharp relief just how amazing Bach's 200 examples in this genre are; and the *Missa piena* in D minor by Ferdinando Paër, an exact contemporary of Beethoven.

Carus is to be congratulated on providing extremely serviceable recordings of repertoire that is, with the exception of the Schütz and Bach, off the beaten track. The soloists are more than adequate, and the choral singing throughout is precise and well-balanced across the different groups. That most of this music is also published by Carus suggests that many choral directors looking to broaden their repertoire could do a lot

worse than to plunge into this excellent survey of the glories of the Dresden court composers. They will be sure to find something to interest them.

PHILIP REED

### José de Nebra: Requiem

Coro Victoria and Schola Antiqua, La Madriñeña / José Antonio Montañó, Juan Carlos Asensio (dirs)

Pan Classics PC 10412 [60:24]

★★★★



De Nebra's *Officium* and Requiem were first sung in August

1758 at the funeral of Doña Bárbara de Braganza, the Queen of Spain. The period-instrument orchestra and slightly remote recording make this seem almost like a recovery from that period. Interest in Nebra peaked with his 250th anniversary in 2018, but his work is still widely known outside Spain, and the historical/mythical operas and lighter zarzuelas seem old even by the standards of his time. Spanish baroque has distinct embellishments that central European styles did not, and the Requiem is richly enough decorated for a queen. The singers do not overdo the melismas and trills, and deliver their parts with due solemnity. A curiosity, but a pleasing one.

BRIAN MORTON

### Carl Friedrich Christian Fasch: Missa a 16 voci; Domenico Scarlatti: Stabat Mater

Kammerchor Stuttgart / Frieder Bernius (dir)

Carus 83.508 [46:36]

★★★★



The Scarlatti and the Fasch share common ground in their use of

multi-divided choral forces. The Scarlatti (for SSSAATTBB and continuo) is the more familiar and has received several recordings, notably from the Monteverdi Choir and The Sixteen. While the Kammerchor Stuttgart certainly get themselves round all the notes in both works on this CD in tidy fashion, it has to be said that they sound a little as if they are going through the motions and not really digging much beneath the surface. The Scarlatti is admittedly more engaging than the Fasch Mass, but is that because it is more familiar to the performers and to us? The recordings were made some time ago – the Fasch in 2007, and 1996 in the case of the Scarlatti – and their reissue in the present coupling would easily have been enhanced by the inclusion of other similar repertoire.

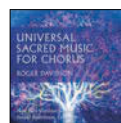
PHILIP REED

### Roger Davidson: Universal Sacred Music for Chorus

New York Virtuoso Singers, Matthew Dine (ob, ca), Jo-Anne Sternberg (cl), Seth Baer (fag) / Harold Rosenbaum (dir)

Soundbrush SR 1034 [64:00]

★★★★



Roger Davidson is still best known as a piano player and devotee of Brazilian jazz, but he is also an ordained minister and composer of a sequence of 'Universal Masses'. His sincerity is undoubted, but his ecumenism always seems a little forced: merely reciting the names of God in Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian and other traditions does not either heal or communicate any commonality between religious cultures,

which leaves these pieces, sung plainly (thus perhaps defying their title) by the Virtuoso Singers of New York. One hesitates to say that either the music or the motive behind it is naïve, but you do not have to be a hardened cynic to get that impression.

BRIAN MORTON

### Paul Moravec: Sanctuary Road

Laquita Mitchell (s), Raehann Bryce-Davis (m-s), Joshua Blue (t), Malcolm J. Merriweather (bar), Dashon Burton (b-bar), Oratorio Society of New York & Orchestra / Kent Tritle (dir)

Naxos 8.559884 [70:43]

★★★★



Naxos's American Classics series has become an indispensable source for contemporary and heritage music. Paul Moravec made a splash with his operatic version of Stephen King's *The Shining*, but now turns to oratorio with a vivid setting of the 19th-century abolitionist William Still's *The Underground Railroad*. Not a horror story in the usual sense this time, but the tale of how African-American slaves and runaways were passed from hand to hand towards some semblance of freedom. The libretto, by Mark Campbell, is sometimes a little prosaic, but the principals lift their lines and the chorus builds steadily to the climactic call: 'Shout from every rooftop / Loud as can be / Free'. Nobody overdoes or pastiches the elements of spiritual or blues, but there are moments when the music resembles Duke Ellington's at its most expansive – which is intended as a compliment.

BRIAN MORTON



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## CHORAL MUSIC

◀ **Beethoven: Choral****Fantasy, op.80**

Ulrich Leisinger (ed.)

SSATB sols, SATB chorus, orch.

&amp; pno

Carus (full score) 10.394/00,

£32.00

Beethoven's Fantasia for piano, choir, and orchestra (the ineptly named *Choral*

*Fantasy*) was premiered during a four-hour, freezing-cold concert, alongside Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the Fourth Piano Concerto, a concert aria, extracts from the C major Mass, and piano improvisations by Beethoven himself. The performance of the Fantasia was under par: it broke down and had to be restarted. That said, when they build that time machine, one of

the pre-sets should be Vienna, 22 December 1808 in order to witness that concert, with Beethoven at the piano. Indeed, what subsequently appeared as the opening three minutes of piano introduction to the *Choral Fantasy* was improvised by Beethoven at the work's first performance.

As Ulrich Leisinger states in the foreword to his edition of the *Choral Fantasy*: "Introduction

and Theme with Variations for Piano, Orchestra, Soloists and Choir" would probably be the more accurate title.' And so it would. Three minutes of piano-fantasy and two minutes of orchestra/piano banter are followed by a substantial Theme and Variations, with the soloists and choir entering (in a manner that anticipates the soundworld of the last movement of the Ninth Symphony) for the

▶

## MIXTURE



### Music for harvest, Verdi transcriptions, and pieces inspired by the cosmos

The DHOTS organist training scheme (see website) is an admirable initiative, and its new collection of harvest-related pieces (and

hymns) – **All Good Gifts Around Us – Eight pieces inspired by the Diocese of Hereford Organists' Training Scheme** (Marbeck Press, £10.00; from [bit.ly/2FUCBQR](http://bit.ly/2FUCBQR)) – is typical of its clear-sighted pragmatism and imagination. The fields are not exactly thick with appropriate music for this occasion, which still occupies a significant place in many parishes, and these eight pieces (mostly by organists with strong Hereford connections, as assistant organist, organist, or organ scholar) therefore fill a notable gap. Some are as straightforward as can be imagined (John E. West and Robert Green), others make slightly greater technical demands (Martyn Lane's 'A Dance for Harvest' needs a bit of manual agility). The practicalities of liturgical usage are at the forefront of considerations – Peter Dyke's 'Flexible Prelude for Harvest' is a model of imagination and economy. The volume is completed with simplified and transposed versions of popular seasonal hymns – a thoughtful and sensible touch. Pretty much every organist whose parish observes Harvest Festival will find something valuable here.

In **A Verdi Organ Album** (Oxford University Press, £16.50), Martin Setchell's effective and musicianly set of transcriptions puts some well-known (and lesser-spotted) Verdi tunes into organ-friendly form. Along with the usual suspects ('Brindisi', 'Grand March', 'Chorus of Hebrew Slaves') there are some less familiar items, each supplied with contextual and (sometimes) interpretative notes; the general preface also sheds some fascinating light on the tradition of Verdi transcribed for organ. There's undeniably a use for these transcriptions, but in one or two cases – such as the *Tarantella* – the compromises necessary to make the piece workable on the organ leave one wondering if it isn't better just to leave it to the orchestra, who can do it as Verdi intended. There's also just possibly something about the Verdian operatic idiom

which, shorn of voice and textual content and removed from its dramatic context, sounds ever so slightly comical. But that's a matter of taste.

In **Apollo** (Oxford University Press, £8.75), James Whitbourn may be the first composer in history to combine Ancient Greek hymns with a programmatic description of manned space flight – the connection being Apollo, to whom Athenaios dedicated his hymn of 128BC (available for consultation in several anthologies, and laid out clearly in the opening bars of the piece for those without access to the same). The composer's preface gives a blow-by-blow account of the relationship between music and space mission (the score itself includes what must surely be a unique 'Countdown: 5...4...3...2...1' rubric: it's not clear whether the audience should join in here) in eight sections, the last and most extended of which is entitled 'Paeon'. The piece was premiered in Houston, and in a big building with a flamboyant instrument, it could prove an interesting endeavour. Some of it is quite fiddly to play.

## Every organist whose parish observes Harvest Festival will find something valuable here

The space theme continues with Bob Chilcott's **Sun Dance** (Oxford University Press, £8.25), an extract from a longer work for organ, strings and percussion dating from the 1990s. This is the last movement of that piece, and it is driven along by ostinato figures within a metre constantly shifting between duple and triple. It needs incisive and precise playing, and given that, it makes an exciting (and not especially difficult) showpiece.

*Stephen Farr is director of music at St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, and ACE Foundation director of music at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He previously held posts at Christ Church and Worcester Colleges, Oxford, and Winchester and Guildford cathedrals. His performing career encompasses work as a solo recitalist, continuo player and accompanist with many leading choirs and ensembles.*



◀ last four minutes or so. The problems of scheduling this work should be self-evident – on economic grounds you can only programme it if you already have vocal soloists and a chorus involved in the rest of the concert. Beethoven himself recognised that the *Choral Fantasy* was an occasional work. But it is a colourful and beguiling piece, and the Carus edition does it proud.

Beethoven often held on to musical ideas for decades before finding a use for them, and in the case of the *Choral Fantasy*, he took one of his own themes from 15 years earlier. The tune was originally that of a song with piano accompaniment, the second half ('Requited Love') of 'Plaint of a loveless man'. The Carus edition of the *Choral Fantasy* provides a singable English-texted alternative to the German words ('Schmeichelnd hold und lieblich klingen'). They are a 19th-century translation by the singer and translator Thalia Andrae (wife of the composer George Alexander Macfarren). As Natalia Macfarren she also made a robust English translation of Schiller's text of the Ninth Symphony – 'Praise to Joy, the God-descended / Daughter of Elysium'. Macfarren's is a good choice of translation of Christoph Kuffner's poem in the *Choral Fantasy* because its quaintly 19th-century lilt has a contemporaneous authenticity to it ('Soft and sweet thro' ether winging / sound the harmonies of life'). And if you had the inclination to use an alternative, even earlier, 19th-century translation, then the anonymous one that accompanied the first English edition of the *Choral Fantasy* is also helpfully laid out line-by-line at the back of Carus's full score ('O how great

the pow'r of Music / o'er the tumults of the soul').

Carus has done its usual excellent job of presenting this under-appreciated work in the best light. Gone are some of the misleading *staccati* of the old Breitkopf edition, to be replaced by Beethoven's fecund daggers. There are other editorial decisions to be made, for instance concerning kettledrum involvement in one section, or the dynamics of the piano's announcement of the Theme; Dr Leisinger has chosen to favour the first German edition of the *Choral Fantasy* over the first English edition (issued a few months earlier) since the Breitkopf edition seems to incorporate some of Beethoven's revisions, which Clementi's London edition did not. But anyway, the Critical Commentary is thorough and the score is clean, so the keen interpreter is able to wallow in a series of alternatives. Another fine Carus publication.

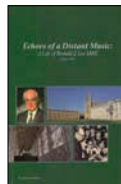
JEREMY SUMMERLY

## BOOKS

### Echoes of a Distant Music: A Life of Ronald E. Lee MBE (1929-1992)

John Crothers

Self-published, ISBN 9 781527 251762, p/b, 328pp, £15  
(available from [thebookwell.co.uk](http://thebookwell.co.uk);  
currently offering free UK p&p)



Ronald Lee was not a household name even in his native Northern Ireland, let alone further afield. Yet as John Crothers explains in this affectionate portrait, his influence on choir members and students during his many years as a church organist and

schoolteacher was profound, and his career was distinguished by achievements of national and even international significance.

Lee was one of the last generation who could find themselves running a secondary school music department without a degree, and with teaching qualifications limited to a Licentiate diploma from Trinity College London. Encouraged by a schoolfriend to enrol as a chorister at the parish church, St Bartholomew's Church of Ireland, in Stranmillis, south Belfast, he fell in love with church music on his first encounter with Harwood's Evening Service in A flat, and the course was set for the rest of his life. By his mid-teens he was accompanying and sometimes directing the church choir. Appointed as temporary music master at Grosvenor High School, a co-educational grammar school in a predominantly working-class area of the city, Lee stayed until retirement, developing the school's music programme in a unique way.

Lee's passion was for choral singing, which he nurtured almost to the exclusion of orchestral music or the academic curriculum. Promising singers were identified, auditioned and enrolled in the choir, which rehearsed every day at lunchtime (packed lunches were eaten in the music department to save time). It is a cliché to say that choral singing in the UK was hugely influenced by the commercial success of recordings from King's College, Cambridge; Ronnie Lee carried this influence to the point of obsession, visiting Cambridge annually to attend Evensong at King's every day for a week, but never hearing any other choir.

He introduced the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols to Grosvenor and to the two churches where he worked, holding the school events in St Anne's Cathedral in order to get as close as possible to the acoustics and atmosphere of King's. An enthusiast for technology, he not only played recordings from Cambridge frequently to illustrate to his singers what they should be aiming for, but lugged heavy reel-to-reel tape recorders from home to school or church to record his choirs and let them hear themselves.

At an early stage he saw the value of competitions. His choirs progressed from local music festivals to prize-winning performances in Montreux, Switzerland, and the UK's BBC/Sainsbury's Choir of the Year Competition – of which his adult choir Renaissance was the first ever winner. Renaissance also became the choir of choice for the Ulster Orchestra, particularly during the tenure as principal conductor of Yan Pascal Tortelier, who pays a generous tribute in this book to Lee's musicianship and the quality of his choir-training.

The Troubles were a backdrop to much of Lee's career, claiming the life of one of his singers and her husband, who died in a hotel bombing not long after Renaissance had sung at their wedding. But Crothers does not dwell on the day-to-day difficulty of carrying on with school and church activities throughout the 1970s and 80s. Painstakingly researched and full of entertaining anecdotes and valuable insights, his book is a well-deserved tribute to a gifted teacher and much-loved man.

CLARE STEVENS

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# ENCOUNTERS

EDWARD ARMITAGE, CHAIRMAN AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF JAM



JUSTIN SURCLIFFE

“When my dad was 60, he retired from advertising and went to do a degree in Music at Christchurch Canterbury. While he was doing that, he started realising how difficult it is for young composers to get music heard and performed. He thought that with his marketing background and my sound engineering background, we could maybe do something together. He then got cancer in 1998 and died. In 2000, I began talking to people and started JAM [John Armitage Memorial Trust], which is now celebrating 20 years. So, I came to the new music side by mistake, because of my dad’s vision.

A really important, personal belief is that repeat performances of commissions are vital; the old adage that the second performance is harder to come by than the first holds true. Many pieces that we’ve commissioned have gone on to start a journey of their own, which actually isn’t anything to do with JAM, but we enabled

it by commissioning the work in the first place. It’s slightly disappointing when some of the organisations we all know and love commission whopping great pieces, they get one performance, and are never heard again. Some of that is down to the forces that are commissioned. I think of the organ as a very early synthesiser – particularly if you’ve got a three- or four-manual organ. If you add a brass quintet, you can do pretty much what you can do with an orchestra.

I love the madness and creativity of my life with JAM. We’re a tiny team and we’re really light on our feet. I love that we’re not bogged down by “procedure”. I’m an ideas person, and I love being part of a creative process. I think everything I’m involved in is fundamentally creative. How lucky?

JAM on the Marsh, our festival in Kent, has a unique feel – working on it is really different. The person who’s conducting today might be moving the chairs tomorrow, and I really like that. It’s in a remote location; if you go any further south, you fall into

the sea, and you can see France from the beach. It’s in a very arts-deprived part of the country, and everyone told us it wouldn’t work. The very same people who said that it wouldn’t work, now think of it as their community festival – brilliant.

A conundrum for new music is that if you say to people, “Do you like new music?”, they will say “no” immediately and assume it’s going to sound like dragging your nails down a blackboard. People assume that they’re not going to like it, in a way that they don’t assume they’re not going to like modern dance. You go to Sadler’s Wells and it’s packed the whole time. Why is that? I think it’s probably as simple as [the fact that] there’s a visual element – you’re seeing something as well as hearing something. Concerts can be seen as quite static. I think that’s a real, ongoing problem. In 20 years of what we’ve been doing, I don’t see that it’s any easier to get an audience now than it was then. People are still sitting in cinemas listening to music that is pretty crunchy and difficult, but say that they’ve never heard contemporary music – every film’s got it in! I think that is a problem and I don’t know what we do about it, other than keep going.

I’m a really positive human being. You’ve simply got to get up in the morning and get stuck in. You’ve either got to do it, or shut up shop and go, so which should we do? For me, we just get on with it and face the hardship and all the rest of it. In my teens and twenties, I suffered with quite a lot of depression, and weirdly, the outcome of that is that I’ve ended up incredibly optimistic, and I truly believe that everything is surmountable. You do come out stronger at the end.

I’m very proud of JAM lasting 20 years. Dare one say it in a corny way: dreams do come true. Because we’ve done it, we’ve done it for 20 years, and I hope we go on doing it for the rest of time, until I’m run over by a bus. In the office, we’re three people. We do it year after year, and it’s possible. That’s the message: anything’s possible if you want it.

*Edward Armitage was speaking to Harriet Clifford. JAM’s 2020 launch concert takes place on 19 March at St Bride’s, Fleet Street, London (see News, p.12).*

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**Eugene Skeef, AYM Tutor**

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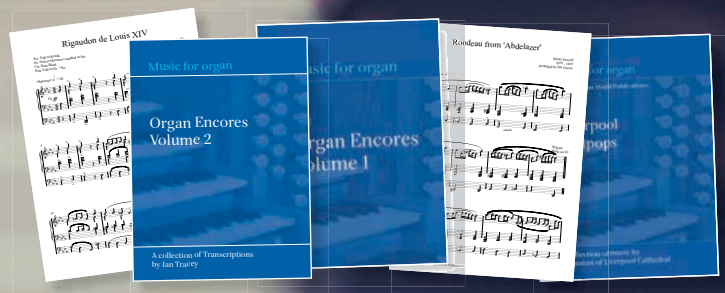


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